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CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Aldana Says CIA, Church Promote Opposition *[Madrid EFE]* 1
Castro Speech at Havana City CTC 23 Dec *[Havana Radio]* 1
Castro Speech at ANPP Closing Session *[Havana Radio, TV]* 7
Raul Castro Tours Army Tank, Chemical Units *[Havana TV]* 19
New Ration Book Sales Schedule Begins 6 Jan *[Havana Radio]* 20

CENTRAL AMERICA

El Salvador

Guerrillas Predict 31 Dec Peace Agreement *[Madrid EFE]* 21
Cristiani UN News Conference Rescheduled *[San Salvador Radio]* 21
More on Delayed News Conference *[Madrid EFE]* 22
Rebel Commander Says Peace Agreements Imminent *[Panama City ACAN]* 22
Government, FMLN Reach Cease-Fire Agreement *[San Salvador]* 22
FMLN Front Welcomes New York Peace Agreement *[San Salvador Radio]* 22
Rebel Commander Assesses Peace Agreement *[Mexico City NOTIMEX]* 23
'Peace Document' Notes Timetable for Agreements *[San Salvador Radio]* 23
Bomb Destroys Foreign Correspondents' Vehicles *[San Salvador]* 24
Attack Repudiated *[AFP]* 24
President Holds News Conference in New York *[San Salvador Radio, TV]* 24
Returns, Comments Further *[San Salvador Radio]* 27

Panama

New Supreme Court Directorate Board Sworn In *[LA PRENSA 28 Dec]* 28
Broadcasters Protest Attempt To Close Radio *[EL SIGLO 30 Dec]* 28
Minister Denies Closure *[Panama City Radio]* 29

SOUTH AMERICA

Colombia

Measures Against Violence, Drugs Announced *[Santa Fe de Bogota Radio]* 30
Foreign Trade Minister on Economic Integration *[Santa Fe de Bogota TV]* 30
* Gaviria Opens Congress, Outlines Plans *[EL TIEMPO 2 Dec]* 31

Peru

Fujimori Discusses Domestic, Foreign Policy *[Lima Radio]* 38
Special Period Called To Push 1992 Budget *[Mexico City NOTIMEX]* 45
Budget Official Comments *[Lima Radio]* 45

Cuba

Aldana Says CIA, Church Promote Opposition

PA3112142291 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0851 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Text] Havana, 31 Dec (EFE)—Carlos Aldana, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Cuba, has accused U.S. intelligence services and the hierarchy of the Cuban Catholic Church of promoting the counterrevolution.

In an address to the Cuban National Assembly on 27 December that was retransmitted on television on 30 December, Aldana said that opposition groups have gone from concern over human rights to subversive activities.

The Cuban politician disclosed that Cuban authorities have arrested a member of the opposition who was involved in contacting active or retired members of the Armed Forces and the Interior Ministry.

The Cuban opposition is divided into two groups: moderates and ultrarightists. Aldana feels, however, that both groups are part of a strategic plan devised and controlled by the CIA.

According to Aldana, last June the CIA used a Spanish journalist, whom he did not identify, to instruct the heads of the two opposition groups that they should transform their organizations into social democratic, liberal, and Social Christian political parties.

After their conversion from human rights advocates into political militants, Aldana said, some of them were to group themselves into an organization called the Cuban Democratic Group [Concertacion Democratica Cubana] and others into the Cuban Democratic Coalition [Coalicion Democratica Cubana].

Aldana expressed regret that the international press has been silent about Cuban reports of these facts which, he said, had been provided in extensive detail to the foreign press that is accredited on the island.

Aldana also identified a third new opposition group, which claims to have a "certain Catholic following," with the support and encouragement of the Cuban church hierarchy.

Aldana claimed that a high-ranking Cuban catholic had said during an opposition meeting that the church occupies itself with "affairs of the other world," but that it considered the activities of the new opposition group to be "necessary and gratifying."

The politician did not mention how his government obtains such information, but on more than one occasion he hinted that the Cuban intelligence apparatus continues to be efficient. He clearly warned that the authorities will take vigorous action.

Regarding the arrest of dissident poet Maria Elena Cruz Varela, who has been hospitalized on three occasions for "hysteria," Aldana denied that she had been the victim of a brutal beating, "as the imperialist-controlled media has informed the world."

Aldana also launched an attack on certain "middle class sectors" of Cuban society who have certain material advantages over most of the population.

Finally, on a personal note, Aldana thanked President Fidel Castro for having saved Cuba in time from the ideological influence of the "socialist breakdown."

Castro Speech at Havana City CTC 23 Dec

FL3112144091 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1900 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Speech by President Fidel Castro at the plenary session of the Havana City Province Cuban Workers Federation, CTC, at the Havana Palace of Conventions on 23 December—recorded]

[Text] Dear Comrades:

During the Congress of the Union of Education, Science, and Sports Workers, Comrade Alfredo [Morales] told me that they had a meeting with the labor union cadres of the capital and he invited me to participate with you for a few minutes. I said: Alfredo, we truly have a great deal of work to do, but if all the labor union cadres of the capital are going to meet, I will do all I can to attend.

I have listened to the words spoken by Alfredo, the report on the work that the labor unions have done in the capital in 1991. It is impressive that with 35 percent of the needed resources, they have completed 85 percent of the plan. This is truly incredible. He spoke of all the heroic deeds done by the workers of the capital throughout 1991, in many activities and many fields. He mentioned, among other things, their efforts in food production. I believe that our capital has truly set a great example during this year with the the two-week mobilizations and the creation of contingents. To tell the truth, on this date last year, the camps had not yet been completed. Everything was still being organized.

He mentioned, or [Pedro] Ross mentioned, the movement that was begun last year, after July, after the assembly in which the union leadership discussed the party congress document, and we were made aware that there was a critical situation in the fields of Havana Province. They did not have enough people and they were losing crops. A call was made to mobilize and save whatever could be saved. The weeds were enormous; in many cases the weeds were higher than the plantain plants. People had to cut high weeds to pick boniato, cucumbers, or squash.

It was a truly disastrous situation because Havana Province had no work force for the vegetable crops. There were not enough students, and the work was not well

organized. There were many defects in organization and leadership, and they had grown accustomed to the idea that production was a task for the cooperatives and individual farmers, since the state enterprises were considered practically powerless to grow the crops that could have been grown on those lands. After the first mobilizations, the camps were created.

At the beginning there were no camps. High quality camps were built, and all the principles of attention to the workers' needs, optimum attention to the workers' needs, were established. If they did not have air conditioners, like the camps for the construction worker contingents, it was because the economic situation at the time would no longer permit it. It was not because we did not have the air conditioners, but because of the cost of fuel. We considered stopping distribution of the ceiling fans we had in order to use them at the camps.

This is how these mobilizations began. This is how the call was made to the workers of the capital. I have had lots of contact with those workers. I do not go around publishing it in the newspapers when I go to the rural areas in Havana Province, but every time I have the opportunity I visit a camp of mobilized workers, or I visit a contingent, or several contingents, or several camps. I visit the agricultural zones, and I have been able to observe the process throughout this year.

These have been years of experience and apprenticeship in all senses. Agriculture was really very badly organized in the province. There was a lot of bureaucracy and many offices. The workers would work here one day and tomorrow somewhere else. No one had any idea of what would result from their work every day. The presence of the leaders, the presence of union cadres, party cadres, people's government cadres, and the presence of the top party and administration officials allowed us to find out all the problems and difficulties of agriculture in the province and take all kinds of measures.

We not only discovered the problems of the vegetable enterprises, which were greater than they seemed, but we also discovered the problems of the state collection agency, or the organization of the state collection agency, which had already been the reason we had decided to build the agricultural distribution markets around the capital. The state collection agency did not even have markets in the capital. It would often distribute products to stores in completely inappropriate places. It did not even have scales for the trucks. This was an area which had deteriorated quite a bit, because when they did not have the necessary work force, and they fell into certain incorrect bureaucratic practices, the result was demoralization.

Therefore, this year has been a year of enormous effort in all these spheres. The agriculture officials were not able to transmit their own experiences about the characteristics of each of the crops, the best seasons, to be able to develop as rational a program as possible to produce food for the capital. It was necessary to plant a crop of tomatoes in Pinar del Rio because there was insufficient space here. The decision has been made for this year to transfer 300 caballerias of sugarcane to the vegetable crops enterprises, because we had to prioritize food for the capital, in the first place.

Despite all this, since the use of oxen requires areas to produce food and pasture for animals, and part of that area had to be used for food for the oxen, the tomatoes crops were kept in Pinar del Rio, for this year. The state currently has 22,000 hectares of land, the cooperatives have 10,000, and the individual farmers have 10,000, in Havana Province and in the vegetable crops areas, not including all the small farmers. There are many small farmers who have one hectare of land. There are independent farmers who sold or rented their lands to the state and were left with one hectare of land in sugarcane areas, in livestock raising areas, in different places. There is a relatively high number of them, but they do not constitute the fundamental source for food production for the capital. This source is, and I repeat, the state's lands, the lands of the agricultural cooperatives, and the lands of the independent small farmers.

Besides all this there is sugarcane. Do not confuse sugarcane with this. It has its resources, machinery, cooperatives, state enterprise, and also independent small farmers. Sugar plantations also have their production for self-sufficiency. We are not including livestock raising areas, which have more than 10,000 caballerias. They too have production for self-sufficiency. There, they did not have the problem of a lack of work force. To the contrary; they had a surplus of work force. We are also not including some crops such as tobacco. They are independent, although they are rotated with other crops to produce food for the people. There are also areas for cress, which is produced in part by independent small farmers in Batabano and by cooperatives, although we are going to develop other areas for cress.

We have basically been talking about those crops to which we have directed the new mobilizations. Traditionally, a certain number of people were mobilized to work in the cane fields and to work in tobacco, but the great mobilization was directly for food production, especially on state-owned lands and to help some cooperatives. We had the schools in rural areas, but they were not being used efficiently. There were also problems and shortages in all these areas, both because of the schools and because of the Agriculture Ministry. We had the schools in rural areas as a work force, but this work force was not sufficient to produce all the food needed for 2 million people. We needed a solid, new work force in those areas.

Alfredo mentioned the increases this year in comparison to last year; 1.5 million does not seem like much, but it is something if you take all these factors into consideration: that the whole organization process took place throughout this year, the camps were completed, the contingents were organized, etc. It is a lot if we consider

that all the state enterprises have increased their production by at least 50 percent. Some of them have increased their production by more than 50 percent. The important increases in production have occurred, and have to occur, on state-owned lands. That is where the majority of the forces have been mobilized.

The peasants have limited potential. They can produce more or less what they traditionally produced. We have asked them for even greater efforts, and we have continued applying what we consider intelligent policies. We need this or that. What crops do you prefer? What do you like? Garlic? Oh, yes, I like garlic. How much garlic do you want to plant if the program is for 150 caballerias? Do you want to plant garlic alone? Yes. Do you want to plant 30 or 130 caballerias? They said, 130. They like garlic. [chuckles] It is a crop that yields a lot. It yields a lot of money, not garlic. [laughter]

Potatoes: The program requires this much. How much do you want to plant? You tell me. Onions: The program requires this much. How much do you want to plant? Peppers: The program requires this much. Carrots: The program requires this much. And so on for all the crops. Do not worry. What you do not want to plant will be planted by the state, because it now has a solid work force. What it has is an army—we must really call it that—in the fields of the province which is capable of doing anything, capable of any effort. It is an army that becomes more seasoned every day. It has been said that some 253,000 people have participated, but some have participated more than once; some have participated two or three times.

The contingents have obtained a great deal of experience in the past two years. The contingents for two-week mobilizations are well-organized. Some of them have participated, as I said, two or three times. Some stay more than two weeks; they stay for a month or 45 days. They have learned; they knew nothing at all. I would say that our working class, the workers of our capital, have acquired an education in agriculture in addition to their industrial or services education. They already know these things. (?So) they know how to pick a boniato in the rainy season and how to pick it when you cannot use any equipment to get it, or how to pick yucca, or how to pick many of these crops, not in the dry season, when it is relatively easy, but in the rainy season.

They have learned a great deal, and they are a tremendous work force. This is why we have been able to ask the peasants: What do you want to plant? Plant it. The state will take care of the rest. With the cooperatives, it is coordinated very well because they have the land all together and it is just as easy to work with them as with a state enterprise. But we also ask them: What do you want to plant? Do you want bananas with microjet irrigation? How many caballerias do you want? We give them the resources, the funds, the materials. We give them all they need. Do you want to plant plantains with microjet irrigation? How many caballerias do you want to plant? And we coordinate with them also. The rest of the big investments are made by the state.

The efforts can already be seen. You can go through the whole province of Havana, as Ross said, and you will not find one weed at the crops. In the last visits I have made, I have seen either everything planted or everything being prepared for planting, and the best possible soil preparation despite this year's late rainfall, all through November, which delayed us in preparing the soil. This is why some crops had to wait 15 days, two weeks, or three weeks. We have had to make an effort in which the workers there, the mechanized workers, had to work 20, 30, and even 36 hours nonstop. They had to take advantage of the break to do what they could not do in September, October, and part of November, to be able to plant the crops in the right season, which is very important. It is important to plant garlic when it has to be planted and potato when it has to be planted, because their season is very short. There is a limited timeframe in which the fields must be prepared and the planting done.

All the experience from last year allowed us to draw up much better plans than those of last year. In addition, there are more than 300 caballerias of plantains with microjet irrigation, of which only part is in production. In other words, a great part of the work done by the workers of the capital cannot yet be seen. We will be able to see it in 1992. We have already made calculations. In 1992, the vegetable crops enterprises in the province will double what they produced in 1990. In 1993, they should produce three times that amount, more or less; three times that amount. [repeats] I calculate that their production in 1994, when all the banana plantations are in operation and there will be about 650 caballerias with microjet irrigation, will be four times what the state enterprises produced in 1990.

This is the pace it is moving at, and it can be seen. There have been some tremendous changes in organization by farms, making each work group responsible for a given area, in addition to the new wage system. But that is not the principle factor at the moment. There are many things that money cannot solve. The most important thing is the organization and the awareness of the people, the motivation they have to do what they are doing. That is why the results cannot be measured in numbers just yet. [chuckles] We will be able to measure them in numbers in 1992, better than in 1991.

All the conditions have been created, including citrus; there are about 70 new camps. There are some that must still be completed. I think there are 72 new camps. There is a total of 90 camps in those areas for mobilized workers. There is one more very good thing: The people of Pinar del Rio have committed themselves to doing the work themselves and freeing up the work force that the capital was sending there. Starting in January, they will take care of everything. People must truly mobilize from far away. The conditions of those camps are not the same as these because they are camps for three months or

th ee-and-a-half months. Those camps are in rice production areas. We have not been able to create by any means the conditions that have been created in the camps that operate for an entire year.

Beginning in January, mobilized workers from the capital will not have to go to Pinar del Rio. This means that we can use these camps to the maximum, during essential times, the times of highest demand. We can offer very good conditions for attending to the workers' needs. This is another factor that helps but, of course, we must plant a lot. Right now, we ask every day how much has been planted of each product. How much in potatoes? We have to make up for the delay in the preparation of the fields due to the rain. Fortunately, the weather in the last few weeks has helped us. Possibly by 31 December, almost all the crops that we had to plant this season may be finished; then we have January and February. Later on we have the harvest seasons. Later we have March and April when there are both harvests and planting, and we need the greatest number of workers.

The results from the application of technology, such as plantains with microjet irrigation, are extraordinary. Some caballerias of plantains with land microjet irrigation, from which we expected 20,000 tons of plantains, have produced 25,000 tons.... [corrects himself] Excuse me, I meant quintals not tons; 25,000 quintals of plantains. The production has surprised the workers and has caused them to be enthusiastic.

It would be too much to mention all the efforts that are being made in the scientific field to make up for the lack of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and all the things that have been done. Aside from the fact that these activities had been given priority, sugarcane received very little fertilizer, because the production of food was prioritized. Potatoes, plantains, and all those crops have not lacked fertilizer. Malanga planting is increasing. The production of seeds is being developed in order to produce yams. If we cannot have yams during the whole year, we could at least have some part of the year, and that way the people from the eastern region can satisfy their desire to eat yams every once in a while. [laughter]

We are working on many different things. Citrus production is increasing. We are working rapidly on the rational grazing system in all of agriculture. I have emphasized the efforts by the Havana workers because I believe it has been an admirable effort. One of the questions that one used to ask is: How are the people going to be in a year from now? Will they be tired of the mobilizations? Will the people's work spirit decrease? How will the contingents be doing?

I can assure you that the seriousness and the behavior of these two-week mobilizations is really impressive. Even more impressive are the results of the contingents. The contingents have associated themselves with the schools in rural areas and have produced a revolution in the spirit of the students. That is where you see the influence of the working class on the students and on the education of those students. There are magnificent students. They have increased their productivity, discipline, and interest. Those who were called guides have disappeared. They no longer need guides.

We made the mistake of turning agricultural workers into guides for students, and they did not know anything and all they did was loaf around. Please forgive me, any honorable guides that may have existed, any honorable and efficient guides. But the concept of guides was another stupidity. It was something we needed to overcome. They do not need guides now. They are mixed in with the workers and the students are assigned their tasks, and they are carrying out their responsibilities.

In other words, those thousands and thousands of students have doubled or tripled their productivity. This is not being told to you by someone who has been told. It is being told to you by someone who has often toured these places and talked to the students and walked through the banana plantations and the fields to see what they are doing, and if they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. This is someone who has talked with the mobilized workers and with the mobilized contingents. I am an eyewitness of what their conduct has been, and what has occurred in one year. After one year, their morale is very high. That morale is reflected in the agricultural workers who used to work only four or five hours, and then they would go home or they would go work for an independent farmer who would pay them a higher wage. An independent farmer can do what the state cannot. Someone who plants one caballeria of potatoes earns a certain amount of money. During the harvest, if he needs to hire someone for a couple of days, he can hire anyone at any wage, because he does not have the obligation to support that employee all year round when he is not working all year round.

This has increased the morale of these workers. The number of agricultural workers has increased this year. General job descriptions have been implemented. Technicians and engineers are on the farms; scientists are at enterprises and farms, and are touring the fields.

There is a complete change, a true revolution in all of this. This is where we have been able to directly see the spirit of the Havana workers. We could say that with them, we can accomplish whatever we want. They have demonstrated it in the minibrigades. They have demonstrated it during the Pan-American Games. They have demonstrated it in every task. This is true of the working class of Havana, the workers in general, because office workers also participate in these mobilizations, and many other workers who are employed not in a factory but in service centers, hospitals, offices, in easier, more comfortable work centers.

I know of many people who get upset if they do not participate. I know of the struggle of many people, when their work is needed and they cannot participate. They get truly upset if they do not get a chance to participate

for at least a week or two every year. They make immense efforts and sacrifices because they have been participating for years. Some of them are older people. Some come out of the office to grab a hoe and begin to plant or harvest yams, or pull up weeds. This is truly meritorious.

One of the best contingents is the one from Habana Vieja in Las Marias Camp. It is called Martires de la Cubre. I am familiar with them because I have visited them at least 10 times. [applause] It is incredible that such outstanding workers have come from Habana Vieja, the core of our capital itself, to work in the furrows. It is not easy to understand the merit of these people and how proud the workers of Havana and our revolution must feel for having workers such as these, [applause] the love they feel for what they are doing, and their work, and the fruits of their work. They have come to see as their children the results of their efforts and sweat. And how they defend them!

They do not want to hear of a thief. If you let them, they would finish off all the thieves. They have implemented order and discipline because they now have rifles, even dogs and horses. The binge is over; the disorganization is over; the thieving is over in those plots. [applause] The proletariat force is guarding those fields. The proletariat hand, strength, and spirit are there. The proletariat spirit does not believe in being soft or in any Cabiri mysteries. That is the truth. It is the only thing that can establish order where so many types of vices have taken root. Only the working class, only the workers in general, are capable of implementing the policy, discipline, and order which these circumstances demand. I believe that this says a lot about our people and workers in general because the ones carrying it out are workers.

Of course, the illegal vendors do not participate. Unfortunately, we have to produce yams for the illegal vendors, potatoes for the illegal vendors and scoundrels, food for the counterrevolutionaries. They should at least keep this in mind and watch themselves. [laughter] The workers are the ones participating, sweating, and laboring under the intense heat and humidity of the summer months. That is hard work. The Europeans who thought themselves such good workers did not dare to do it. They got the Indians and almost annihilated them through the work in the fields. Then they hunted Africans to turn them into slaves, and used them in the cane fields to do the work that Cubans do now, that the Havana workers do now.

Hunger does not force them to participate, as in capitalist times, when vast unemployment forced people to stand in lines to get work in the cane fields. Conscientious men and women are the ones who go to participate in this hard work and endure not only heat and humidity, but also mosquitoes and flies, gnats and deerflies, and every other insect pest around. We have seen how our people are capable of challenging all these nuisances. I believe that this requires as much courage as to grab a rifle and jump into a trench. To grab a rifle and hit the trenches is for many Cubans almost a party because of the courage and special character of our people. Sometimes, to spend August with a hoe in your hands requires more courage than the courage needed to combat the Yankee infantry or whatever.

I know our people because I have seen them under many different circumstances. More than 300,000 volunteered for the first internationalist mission in Angola. Every time there was a new mission we conducted an inquiry and hundreds of thousands volunteered to fulfill our internationalist duties.

Cubans are often quicker to volunteer for Ethiopia than for Baracoa. Baracoa seems too near and not worth the effort they are willing to make, the heroism they are willing to show. We have examples of which I am a witness, apart from the many things accomplished by the workers of Havana. Here in Havana is where the struggle is the hardest in every sense, and the special period is especially difficult because there are 2.1 million inhabitants. There are many problems from the past, which during the rectification process we had planned to face and solve as fast as possible, where we have the most problems, as in housing and all types of problems.

The energy crisis now makes it more difficult. Havana is where we have the most transportation problems because it is such a large city. There are provincial capitals where you can walk to work, where you do not even need a bicycle. There are many provincial capitals where most workers can walk to work, but in Havana you cannot even go on a bicycle. Those buses consume a lot of fuel, besides there are not spare parts for them. We have not received any parts for them. This is serious. The capital is always more cosmopolitan; there are always more influences exerted on the capital. That is where the enemy tries to exert more influence, where the proletarian spirit is stronger, but also where the petit bourgeoisie spirit is stronger. That is a historical characteristic of Havana. In the same place where there is a great proletarian spirit and influence, the old influences of capitalism and capitalist ideology linger. This is where the most foreigners with political agendas travel and move around. This is where the revolution has the greatest economic burden due to the enormous concentration of the population.

Therefore, in the capital we have problems that do not occur in Las Tunas, or Holguin, or in any other province with much smaller cities where it is easier to solve any problem. That is why you have such a hard, difficult task here. You have to understand this and be aware of it. That is why the biggest effort is expected from you, more than in any other part of the Republic. The greatest spirit, the greatest combativeness is expected of you, because this is where, as Ross explained, the enemy tries to strike, divide, confuse, kill all hope, ideologically weaken the masses, morally weaken the people, and it focuses its attacks on this.

You have to realize that at present imperialism has only one enemy to attack. That enemy is called Cuba. All the resources that were focused against the USSR and the socialist bloc before are today focused against us. They have more or less normal relations, diplomatic and economic ties, with a certain consideration and respect, with other socialist countries. But there is one country that sticks in their throat, a country called Cuba. We stick in their craw. [laughter] They cannot come to terms with us, they cannot understand us, they cannot even conceive nor imagine how Cuba can resist. They base their conclusions on objective facts, such as the disappearance of the socialist bloc.

Do you realize that we have become the bastion of socialism in the heart of the West? What a task! What a historic deed for a country that wants to defend its independence, that wants to defend its values, that wants to defend its revolution, that wants to defend socialism! This is a country that is convinced, persuaded in its heart, that this is the noblest cause, the most altruistic cause, the most just cause, because this is the only thing compatible with human dignity. We know what happens in the rest of the world, and not only in developed capitalist countries where people die of hunger and cold in the streets, where they die at the same time as there are great personal fortunes that sometimes amount to billions of dollars.

Take a look at what happens in the Third World, in the undeveloped capitalism of the Third World. We do not need to have lived through capitalism to understand what it means to have women who have to sell themselves to survive, those hundreds of thousands of women. What work would capitalism have offered the more than 1 million women who work in our country? All our female doctors, teachers, nurses, professors, or those who work in the factories, or in services—what jobs would they have had in capitalism? What respect for human dignity was there in that society? What equality? What respect was there for people of any color but white, such as the Europeans or the Yankees? What of the racial discrimination, the precarious life of the people, the vices, the abuses, the injustices implicit in that system, and in which mankind cannot be forced to live?

Those who have known freedom do not give it up. They prefer to give up their lives rather than give up their freedom. They prefer to give up their lives rather than give up their dignity. Because what is life worth without freedom and dignity? [applause] What is life worth if a person is treated like an animal, a dog, or worse than a dog? The rich bourgeoisie take a hundred times better care of cats and dogs than they do people, and they are moerned about cats and dogs than about people. [applause]

There is no one who can force us to go back to that past, no matter who may fall, no matter who may collapse, and no matter who may fall apart [desmerengar]! [applause] They will not be able to criticize this nation's courage, dignity, honor, firmness, or rebel spirit. They want us to surrender, to fall apart. [laughter] We could not even if we wanted to, because steel does not crumble. [applause] That is why they want to isolate us and make the embargo harsher. That is why they get irritated, because we are willing to fight, to resist, no matter what the mediocre people may think. I am not referring to the weaklings we may have within our society, the unworthy children of this nation. I am referring to the world, to those who so easily become intimidated and tremble. We do not become intimidated, and we do not tremble. [applause]

To those who doubt and hesitate: We do not doubt or hesitate. [applause] To those who advise us to make concessions: We will never make any concessions to the imperialist enemy, and we will not make more than the changes we consider good and appropriate to perfect our revolution and our socialism. [applause] To those who pity us, we say: Do not pity us. One feels admiration and not pity for heroes and courageous people. [applause]

These are the concepts and ideas that should be deeply rooted in our hearts, because they are the ones that correspond to the people to which history has assigned the responsibility it has assigned to us. They are the ones that correspond to the people who have to accept the challenge we have to accept. We have spent more than 30 years confronting the Yankee colossus, fighting without yielding, fighting without a rest, confronting its aggressions, threats, and embargoes. How many things have they done against Cuba in these 30 years! They are mistaken when they harbor illusions about the revolution.

As we said yesterday, we will see which sugar mills they are going to divide up. We will see if they get even one screw from one of our sugar mills. [laughter] What land are they going to seize? Because we are irrigating it with our sweat. What houses, what buildings, what schools? Are they going to turn the child care centers into brothels or stores? To turn the schools into what? To turn everything the revolution has done into what? What are they going to do with the houses the revolution has given the people? They are not going to get even one brick from those houses they want to take away from the people. They will have to conquer them inch by inch. [applause]

They will not face only the courage of our people; they will also face the talent and intelligence of our people. We will know what to do in every case and how to do it, what to do and how to do it. [repeats] Of course, we are not idiots like the many there have been in some places. We must be firm and solid. We must not allow the counterrevolution to lift its head anywhere. [applause] We must not let the counterrevolution organize anywhere. The issue of the little groups is nothing new for us. At the beginning of the revolution, in very difficult times, at the time of the Bay of Pigs, there were more than 300 counterrevolutionary organizations in this country. So our people have had a lot of experience. These people who are playing this role at this time in

world history are the people who have experience, people who are organized, united, and tested.

This can be seen every day when we meet with Pioneers, students, people at the spare parts forum, the teachers union. We see this everywhere. These are not just any people. These are seasoned people, veteran people. [applause] These people are marking today the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ignacio Agramonte, who knew how to answer [applause] who knew how to answer when they asked him what weapons he was going to win that war with. He told them: With the Cubans' pride. [applause] Yes, with our pride, our dignity, our honor, our patriotism, our revolutionary conscience, our spirit, we will know how, we will be able to overcome whatever obstacles that may arise.

But in fact our people, and we can say this with pride, is already writing an unprecedented page of history. Who would have thought that the USSR, the country that resisted Nazism, that resisted the interventions by many Western powers at the time of the revolution, that confronted the millions of men and tens of thousands of tanks and planes Hitler attacked them with, that fought in Leningrad for 900 days of siege, that fought in Moscow and Volgograd, and fought everywhere, was going to fall apart in that way?

Who could have imagined that our noble people, our heroic people, our people who have always followed a policy of principle throughout their history, and refused to be swallowed by the colossus of the North, that today, when all this is happening, they continue to be firm. They are worthy of the admiration of the world. They are worthy of the admiration of the world. [repeats] [applause]. That is why I said we are writing an unprecedented page in history. But, are we capable or not of writing this page? I ask you, the representatives of the working class, the representatives for the workers of our capital: If we had been there in 1868 and had heard the ringing of the Demajagua bell, calling to battle, would you have gone to battle or not? [prolonged applause]

I ask you: If we had lived in 1895, that 24 February when Marti, in the name of the revolutionary party which united all Cubans and all patriots, called for the second war of independence, would you have said no or yes? [audience answers: "Yes"] And if you were back again in those days of March, 1952, and if the fatherland had fallen under the degradation which that imposition, that tyranny meant, and if you were called to fight, to enlist in the ranks for the attack on the Moncada barracks, or to come over in the Granma; Would you have said yes or no? [audience answers: "Yes"]

This is why now, when we are living in a much more exceptional time, a time in which we are defending all the values which they defended in 1868, 1895, and in 1952, now we are defending everything. Now, when our people are known throughout the world, and they are not known for being cowards, but for being courageous. They are not known for vacillation, but for resolution. They are not known for being uneducated, but as a highly educated people, prepared, instructed. They are not known for being ignorant, but for being politically astute people. Now, when we are known throughout the world, the world knows what Cuba is.

And when thousands of millions have their hope set, yes the billions of hungry people in the Third World, the poor of the Third World, and the exploited, including from many capitalist countries, many capitalist countries, [repeats] there are many people who support, who feel admiration for Cuba. Now when we have taken socialism as our banner, when we have taken the most noble, just ideas which the whole history of mankind has known; now when we are defending the ideas of Marti, of Cespedes, of Agramonte, of Maximo Gomez, and of Antonio Maceo, of Mella, and Guiteras, of all those who have fallen in this heroic revolutionary struggle in the past 30 years; of those who died in other lands, who gave their blood for the liberty of the peoples; now that we represent all this, we invite you and we call you to the battle: What are you going to say? Yes or No? [audience answers, "Yes"] [prolonged applause].

We know that our people, especially our workers, and we know that our people in the capital, especially our workers, our laborers in general, will know how to be at the peak of dignity and heroism, which this hour demands.

That is why I say: Socialism or death, Fatherland or death, We will win. [prolonged applause]

Castro Speech at ANPP Closing Session

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[Speech by President Fidel Castro at closing session of the National Assembly of the People's Government, ANPP, at the Palace of Conventions in Havana on 27 December—recorded]

[Text] Comrades, worry not [laughter] because I plan to be brief. [laughter] We have had many events (?starting) with the congress which took place very recently, in October. October, November, and December, and in the past two months we have had many activities of all kinds. We have had meetings in which we had to speak at length to explain problems. We attended the meetings of the Pioneers, FEEM [Federation of Intermediate Level Students], steel and spare parts, and teachers. Days ago—although not covered by the media—I had the opportunity to talk to a large group of labor leaders from the capital.

On each one of those occasions I talked at length, explaining the problems and situations. I dislike repeating things but there are times when one must because there are ideas that we must insist on and reaffirm to raise our awareness of reality.

This is why the need to say a few words at the closure of this assembly was evident. Fortunately, I have said many things already, and said a few here. We held sessions. What do you call them, sessions? What do you call them? [unidentified speaker answers: sessions] Sessions. I would say that we have had sessions of intense work and of serious work, of profound analysis.

In general I believe all comrades have a very good impression of these two days of work and the numerous speeches that were made. I feel the work was fruitful. We analyzed important problems; all were important. All of them are interrelated. We reached agreements and adopted measures with urgency and expediency as warranted by the current circumstances. We are living in times when problems can be left unsolved indefinitely. We have received a lot of information, various kinds of information.

There were very good speeches: The Interior Ministry report and the speeches by Comrade Colome, by the chief of the National Police Directorate, and the brilliant speech by Aldana this morning. I believe we should be satisfied with the work of the past two days.

The problem pertaining to improving the People's Government is very important. As I said, we could have discussed many other issues here because we have a greater opportunity. I believe that we discussed here the People's Councils, tenure of district delegates, the recommendation that people who are not... [pauses] people who are not district delegates be allowed to join that leadership council or whatever it is called. We discussed several other topics, especially those pertaining to the People's Councils. We discussed that at length.

I was particularly satisfied with that discussion, because we already see the results of ideas that are pending implementation to achieve genuine improvement. We had decided to put into practice all those things on which there was evident consensus since the discussion and debate to call a party meeting.

In the meantime we had to improve the People's Government. There were ideas that we had to implement and that could not wait one more minute. That is what we did with the People's Councils. It was very pleasant to realize here, thanks to the speeches by the comrades, that these ideas also have excellent uses and applications in the countryside, not only in the cities. It became very clear to me that we must immediately bring the People's Council to the countryside and all the country's other cities. It is a formidable instrument and of special importance in this special period. I believe it will always be important because it is the only way to manage with genuine efficiency the resources and enterprises we have, the mechanisms we have, the mechanisms and organizations we have.

During the discussion of the People's Government, several deputies very spontaneously said on three or four occasions that our country's democracy is the world's best; that there is no country more democratic than ours; that there is no system more democratic than ours.

I was very pleased to hear that. I have that very deep conviction and discussed this with certain visitors. Our political system and our democracy have absolutely nothing to envy of any country on earth. I believe our democracy is highly meritorious, because it is located 90 miles from the United States and because the sword of Damocles has dangled over our heads for so long.

The direct election of deputies was an important issue not discussed here; there was no time. Of course, it is among the congress' recommendations. So is the direct election of provincial delegates; they are the delegates of the provinces.

We were lucky to have chosen a good formula. I remember, as if it were yesterday, the very day more than 15 days ago when we discussed this issue. We wondered: How are we going to conduct the elections? Through the sole candidate system that we knew was being used in certain places? I truly disliked that kind of formula. I wondered: Why do we not find another? Why do we not invent our own?

That is how our system of nominating district delegates was born. Who was going to nominate the district delegates? Was the party going to nominate them? I defended the thesis that the district delegates should be nominated by the residents at an assembly. We later discussed how many candidates there would be and decided eight. We also decided to hold new elections if no one garnered more than 50 percent plus one of the votes. By the way, I often, I believe that nearly always, had to go to vote twice; vote on two consecutive Sundays, because no one ever garnered more than 50 percent of the vote.

That idea was the basis for our establishing a procedure that really exists nowhere else; in no other socialist or capitalist country. Who nominates? The people nominate. Who elects? The people elect. That placed us at the forefront of the other countries, because in other countries the political parties nominate; the party or parties nominate. They usually draft the lists of candidates.

They estimate how many votes each party will garner and know how many will be elected. The parties virtually elect the deputies. These parties, if they know that only one of their candidates will be elected, list their strongest candidate first on their list to have him elected. Others, if they have 20 candidates and know that only six or seven will be elected, will list the six or seven candidates they want elected first. As a rule, in nearly all countries political parties decide who will be elected deputies, not the people. People do not nominate; parties do.

Through this mechanism the parties not only nominate but decide who will in fact be elected. They elect a parliament and those parliaments sometimes elect a president; parliaments do that. They elect a head of state or head of government. There are many countries where

the head of state inherits that position; kings and emperors. No one has absolutely any role in their election. That was perhaps a decision made 300 years ago. It is a matter of genetics and heads of state succeed each other. Our system rejects this. Those countries have heads of state that were elected 300 years ago. The position is hereditary.

In response to some of the journalists' questions, a comrade commented on the elections. I actually oppose the direct election of chiefs of state and of leaders and presidents of the People's Governments. This is a strong belief of mine. We do not need people with excessive power; we need people with limited power.

If the party's first secretary were elected by the congress, he would virtually only answer to congress and not to the Central Committee. There are times when people have favored the direct election of congress; it makes the congress stronger and more powerful than other bodies. If the first secretary were elected by the Central Committee and not directly by the congress, we would have a first secretary or a general secretary—whatever he is called—with less power than if he were elected by the congress. He would have to report to the body that elected him, and that body could hold a meeting within 15 days or one month. A congress would actually need to be convened to replace him or call a secretary of the party to account. The same holds true for the head of state. It is much more democratic and practical to elect him through a body or assembly, because an individual elected in a direct election receives enormous power that makes him feel superior to all others. This individual feels the backing of an election and believes he needs to answer to no one. I find that it is much more democratic and practical to elect the leadership of the state, that is, the Council of State, through an assembly. This is the case in our country. I think this a simpler and more democratic system of election.

Do you know how this is done elsewhere? The United States elects its president with 25 percent of the vote, because half of the people do not bother to vote. It has two parties that are exactly the same. We could virtually say that the United States has a one-party system because its two parties are similar in every sense: in ideology, methodology, and everything else. They take turns within the same system. They are elected in general elections that are supposed to....[pauses] According to...[pauses] a person might not be elected president in the United States even if he garnered a majority of the vote, because he could lose elections in certain states that have a larger number of delegates. A person could not be elected president there even if he garnered a popular majority, because each state votes separately and each state has a certain number of votes. That could happen very easily.

I strongly believe that men do not need excessive power. Men who have great responsibilities within the government and the state require limited power.

That power must be limited by the party first of all. It must be limited by government institutions. This will prevent the election of an individual who has power over everything around him and who answers to absolutely no one. This is why the political campaigns become real contests. Such political campaigns cost millions of dollars. There are even techniques that have been developed on how to infiltrate these campaigns. They were developed by the capitalist monopolies which learned how to advertise tobacco, cigarettes, alcohol, soft drinks, and everything. These same techniques are even used in electoral campaigns, where they use large amounts of money to try and influence the will of the voters.

In our political system, such campaigns do not exist. We found a magnificent method: People could choose the delegates in their districts based on each citizen's merit and qualifications. We broke free from those foul political chicanery campaigns that existed here in the past; they no longer exist. At none of the assemblies has this problem been discussed. Never. We have discussed the issue of the president of the Peoples' Municipal Government, but this problem was never presented.

I have another strong conviction regarding our countries and Cuba in particular, and that is my belief in the tremendous convenience of the single party system. I have strong convictions about this. I have thought about all these problems many times in my revolutionary life, because the multiparty system is an instrument of imperialism to keep societies fragmented and divided into 1,000 pieces. It turns societies into societies that are unable to solve their problems. A country that is divided into 10 pieces is an ideal country to dominate and subject. This is because there is no national will as the nation's will is broken up into many pieces. The nation's work is divided into many pieces. Intelligent minds are all divided; they are divided by the constant and never ending struggle between the fragments of society. Third World countries cannot endure this, but they must, because it is forced on them and they have been subjected and dominated for a long time. I believe that unity is essential in a society that must face the problems of underdevelopment and develop under the difficult conditions of today's world.

Marti realized this over 100 years ago. I do not know why the anniversary is not commemorated at the same time as the party's creation in 1992. He probably realized it even before that and was clear about it. Marti saw how the break-ups and divisions had undermined the first war of independence. He said and repeated this many times. All his efforts were aimed at having the new war of independence be based on other concepts.

Marti did not agree with that roving chamber—roaming all over—that consumed a large amount of resources and men in a never-ending debate in the middle of the war. He had other ideas about directing the war, organizing the country during the war, and creating a party to direct the war and the revolution.

However, these ideas came not only from Marti, but also from Bolivar. Bolivar was for Latin American unity and a central government with much authority. He knew there were many dividing factors in those Spanish colonies and he strongly defended the idea of a single republic with a strong central authority. Bolivar was not for a parliamentary government because during that long war—that tremendous struggle to unify all those societies—he saw that unity and strong authority were essential. We could say that Bolivar was also in favor of single party government. He was a constant critic of factions and parties.

He was so right that, in the end, regionalism put an end to his great dream of unity and his struggle for integration and unity. A good many republics declared themselves independent. It was a process similar to that which is going on in the Soviet Union now. They separated and, later on, each country split into states, too. Federalism appeared, countering the criteria of the central government. There was fighting between the central and local governments in each of the republics.

Latin America will soon have spent 200 years struggling for independence and what does it have? What does it have? [repeats] Latin America, the America born from Spain, the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, could have been much more powerful than the United States is today. If Latin America had united, the United States would have been unable to snatch away more than half of Mexico. If Latin America had united, Puerto Rico would be part of that Latin America today. There would be no Panama Canal owned by the Yankees or that Republic would not have been colonized for so long. Central America would not have been subjected to tyrannic and bloodthirsty governments for dozens of years, governments that have written the history for almost a century-and-a-half in our America. Had Latin America become united like the forefathers wanted—particularly Jose de Miranda, the forerunner of this idea—or like Bolivar wanted, today, possibly, Latin America would be the most powerful nation on earth, without a doubt, because of its territory, population, and natural resources. What are we? Some do not like it. Someone became disgusted because I said: We could have been everything, but we are nothing. He did not like it. Well, then, one of the gentlemen who was there who, by the way, is not a model friend of Cuba, began arguing. Not everything has been published this prompted several arguments.

Someone reacted when reference was made to that brief eight-minute speech in which I said we could have been everything, but we are nothing. But I only said a very clear truth. What are we today?

The United States invades one country today, then another tomorrow, and yet another one the day after tomorrow. It does as it pleases in each country. When coups d'etat were fashionable, it promoted coups d'etat. No one knows if they will become fashionable again. The United States promoted all the coups d'etat of recent times, beginning with Pinochet's in Chile. There were coups in many countries [words indistinct].

The CIA became the master. The CIA became the highest level professor of all torturers. The CIA made torture a science. It implemented all tactics as to how to make people disappear and do horrible things. It taught all governments how to torture. What is Latin America today?

These ideas have been discussed since the beginning of our history, not only Cuban but Latin American history. Many years ago, almost 200 centuries [as heard], these ideas were discussed. One hundred years ago, Jose Marti, the greatest thinker of this continent, the greatest political thinker, without any doubt whatsoever, clearly saw that there was a need to lead the war in a set way, based on history. He saw that there was a need for solid unity. He saw that a party was needed to lead the revolution.

I do not recall seeing anything else by Marti, any reference to the multiparty system. He said the multiparty system caused the country's fragmentation.

In Latin America we have the fragmentation of Latin Americans and, within each country, we have the fragmentation of each country. These are ideal conditions for imperialist domination in these countries.

If you divide all Third World countries into 20 pieces, the path to world hegemony becomes extraordinarily easy for imperialism. Who is going to convince the Chinese, for example, that the country must be divided into 1,000 pieces? They have explained their stand very clearly. They have explained the role of the party. I do not know if any parties do formally exist there. However, the leading role of the Chinese Communist Party is very clear.

The principles of that party, the principles of the revolutionary process, and the objectives of socialism are very clear. Imagine that country divided into 10 parts. Do you think it would have had any possibility of taking the historic leap it took? The party put an end to hunger and the country's calamities.

Therefore, I am firmly convinced that one party is and must be—for a long historical period, no one can predict how long—the form of political organization in our society. Two convictions....[as heard]

On the recommendation of our congress and in the quest to improve our system, we proposed the direct election of our deputies to the National Assembly, the branch from which other state powers stem. This does not mean that our system was not democratic. I already compared what happened in the capitalist countries and the role of the parties that choose the national assembly deputies and how the national assembly subsequently chooses the government.

Our system of indirect election is very democratic because its basis, the district delegate, is democratic. These delegates directly choose—it is a second-degree

election—the provincial delegates and they elect the National Assembly deputies.

When we put this principle into practice our historical responsibility becomes very big. This is when we cannot react as district delegates.

When the National Assembly was created, we followed a principle—not by law but by tradition—that the majority of the deputies would become delegates to....[pauses] District delegates would become district delegates of principle.

So when you are going to cast your vote, honestly, on whether the term in office will be two-and one-half or five years, you will have to examine your conscience very thoroughly so that you do not act on your opinion as district delegate. Instead, you will have to think of what is best. You must put your conscience to work in the purest manner. This assembly must make that decision. I know the responsibility is great. No one had any complaints about the election. We went through the entire discussion of the People's Government and not a single deputy referred to the direct election. I think it is a step in our effort for improvement. It is a step to make our system more democratic.

It is a step to make this system more irreproachable from the international standpoint. The direct election has had a great impact. However, the imperialists did not want that. We know very well what imperialism wants in the world.

Imperialists want a multiparty system, politicking, market economy, return to capitalism, and all that. This is why we do what we do, based on our principles and to improve our system. I believe that to have taken this step is to improve our system, which establishes the direct participation of the population in the election of deputies. But we have to do this without politicking. We have to think carefully and use our intelligence so our mechanism will not lead us to politicking or competition; some of the candidates waging war on the others. This is very important. Fortunately, we have the basic principle. Who nominates the candidates? It should be the people, not the party. In the eyes of the honest people of the world and true political, progressive, and revolutionary thinkers, this method makes it easier to understand the party's role in society.

The party does not nominate. The party can nominate, but I do not think it should nominate candidates for deputies. We should seek a mechanism so the people can nominate. Who are the people's representatives? The circumscription delegates. We must stick to the same mechanism. The people elect their delegates. First, the people nominate the deputy circumscription delegates. The people elect them. The delegates, not the party, nominate the deputies, those men and women elected directed by the people in the circumscriptions. I am advancing some ideas. These ideas were also discussed at other times. We must keep thinking of all this. It is the people who should nominate and list the names of the candidates.

There must be commissions. We must think of ways to give the broadest participation in the proposals to be made. For instance, we have mass organizations. No country possesses mass organizations such as ours, which are stronger. We can prepare and create unobjectionable instruments to fulfill consistently the principle that the people are the ones who nominate. The people are the ones who elect. I think that in the future, therefore, it will not be the delegates who elect the deputies to the National Assembly. The delegates will nominate the deputies so the people can elect them. Through these mechanisms, we will create formulas to avoid politicking or division and fragmentation among the names of men proposed. We have to think carefully on the nature of the mechanism whereby the people will participate in a direct election of the deputies. In some places, it is necessary to elect five, in others, one, in still others, seven, according to the municipality and the province, so the representation can be more or less proportional to the population. We have discussed this. The commission, however, must work hard for the time when the proposals will be presented to the assembly.

Our system presupposes the participation of the people's majority. Should the revolution lose the people's majority, it would lose power because it is the people who nominate and elect. The revolutionary spirit would not be lost because the revolution is a principle, an ideal, a program for which we must fight at all times and under any circumstances. We have to be consistent with what we do. What we created more than 15 years ago presupposes the people's majority. In what sense is this an improvement? The revolutionaries are expected to make an even greater effort and do better work based on the premise that it is necessary to keep the support of the people. This is the great challenge that we met more than 15 years ago. This is nothing new was done thanks precisely to the adequate and democratic formula we used to elect the People's Government organs.

Now we take one step further. We must deal with the direct election of the deputies. One step that signifies greater demand from the revolutionaries in their political work and their duty to preserve the unity of the people's majority. This is nothing new. With what we have today, exactly the same would have happened. Our system presupposes the people's majority to maintain the present power. The new one will be more or less the same. It presupposes the majority of the population. This should be precisely the task of the revolutionaries.

In this context, there are many ideas I do not want to mention, if we want to do things right. We should try to deal with all things that might lead to injustice, politicking, demagoguery. The other day I proposed to the teachers to make some changes in the election of their unions. There was one with a 'Y' and a lot of canceled ballots. I made a proposal to them because the congress

could make arrangements so they can vote for as many candidates that were nominated. We have to study the mechanism very carefully. We have to (?decide) which is the best mechanism. We cannot fall in politicking. We cannot let our comrades seek votes and make politics. We must prevent this from happening to the men who are nominated as candidates for National Assembly deputies. In addition, we have to do it in such a way that there will not be the slightest doubt about the democratic nature of the procedure. This is one of the things that the revolution does in its effort for perfection. Even more authority will be given to the National Assembly. We must make every effort, however, so this procedure can adhere to quality.

It would be useless for us to do things very democratically but to neglect quality. Our mechanisms should seek to secure quality in the women and men elected. Apparently, the future belongs to women. All 10 of the participants in this meeting were women. The men were more quiet. The women were more active. But we must go after quality and bar politicking. This is why we must think carefully about the formulas we will suggest to the National Assembly in the search for these objectives: democracy, improvement of the system, and quality. Each candidate will have to face the masses with his own authority and prestige. We are seeking ways to harmonize the existence of a party with the most genuine democratic form and nature possible.

Apart from this, we should not care about what others say or do. We should pass judgment on ourselves before any other people do. We should stand before ourselves and our own consciences. We will not wait for the tremendous, enormous, gigantic monopoly of imperialism over the world mass media to cease to exist. It will be necessary to write and print books, make statements, and deliver them to parliaments. It will be necessary to come up with many things, a large number of cassettes, to do what we want. Maybe we will have to revolutionize the way we spread our ideas and reality in the world. The examples given in this meeting show, however, that the battle is very uneven in the face of the media and the resources at the disposal of imperialism. Take a look at all the wars that were aired on television. If there is fighting in Tiblisi, there goes U.S. television. How many millions of dollars are required for that? If anything happens in Moscow, there you will find U.S. television. If anything happens in Iraq, if there is war there, it is televised. What chance does a Third World country, a small, developing country, stand of having those information media?

This is why we.... [changes thought] Many wonder: Why are you people not known? We cannot be blamed for this. Very little is known of our system, our life. This is why many people arrive here and say: Gosh, I like this idea. And they say very honestly: I believed, read, or saw this or that. Many change their views when they are confronted with our viewpoints. The authority, prestige, and moral of the revolution is not negligible. These are the weapons it has to persuade others. How do the masses react? I have seen this throughout Latin America. I remember my trip to Venezuela. Despite the flood of propaganda against Cuba and the revolution, and me personally, the population's reaction was incredible, particularly when we had our first contacts and the first interviews were held for television and for the press. It was impossible to walk. Of what use have been 30 years of campaign and slander?

The masses have their instincts, become aware. The masses see a flag raised aloft at a time when many flags have been lowered and disappeared. This is the lone star flag. [applause] This is the flag of the Cuban Revolution. But it is our duty to be revolutionaries, to follow principles, to be consistent with these principles, to be our own judges first. Let us never become demoralized, discouraged, or embittered, although lies and slander go round and round the world. We Cubans know how things are. People instinctively see things right. An entire world is beginning to react against this monstrous hegemony the United States wants to impose on us. Let us work for our system.

We must implement our principles and must first learn to judge ourselves. We must not be afraid to ask for other people's opinions, or to listen to criticism, advice, or whatever you want. You must not be afraid of discussing whatever you want. However, we must trust ourselves. As we recently said, the lack of 100 percent trust in ourselves led us to make mistakes and errors. Many people thought everything that came from the USSR was perfect. If it came from the USSR, it was perfect; there could be no defects. Many people underestimated a revolution that has been as creative as the Cuban Revolution; it has experienced and contributed so much. The Cuban Revolution has made its contributions. I am not going to list the contributions, but the Cuban Revolution has made many contributions. I say this because I believe this is a necessary complement of what was discussed regarding the People's Government.

I am not going to expand on the other topics we discussed although they were very interesting, especially the topic of crime. A serious and in-depth analysis was made during the discussion and conclusions were reached. We talked about the political and moral damage caused by crime in our society. We talked about the need to take a series of measures and to create an entire program through which we will keep working urgently so that all the people can wage their war against crime.

An in-depth and serious analysis was done of the report submitted by Comrade Aldana, who talked about counterrevolutionary groups, counterrevolutionary activities, the tactics and strategy of the enemy, the way the enemy works, and the objectives of the enemy.

All of us who are here and who are members of this National Assembly must now examine our own consciences. Normally, we would already have a new assembly. The circumstances in which our country was involved in as a result of the disaster in Europe, and the

awareness we already had of the need to improve our system since the call was made, did not give us enough time to implement all of these ideas; we could not apply them in a matter of months. We had no other choice but to extend the sessions at the assembly. We needed time to study the Constitution, the changes in the Constitution, and the new laws. It was not right for us to hold full speed elections for the restoration of a mandate for one or one-and-a-half years. We waited and I believe we did the right thing. The fact we did it this way gives this assembly great responsibility. It gives each one of the men and women in this assembly great responsibility as you are the National Assembly for the special period. [applause].

This is the most difficult period in Cuba's history. It is not just the most difficult period of the revolution, but the most difficult in Cuba's history. I call on each one of you to first think about this fact. I hope this is a great honor for each one of you, not a disgrace or a tragedy. I hope none of you feel burdened by life or by history because it gave you this responsibility. I hope each one of us will be thankful for life and history and for receiving this responsibility, which we have to fulfill.

The most difficult year—I would not dare say the only one—is the one that begins now in 1992. I could not call it the year of the special period because the special period will last more than a year.

The special period developed progressively. The most difficult phase will take place in 1992. Because it cannot get any worse than at its most critical point, the special period will begin to subside little by little.

I am always warning the comrades. I tell them: Be prepared for the worst circumstances. If 6 and-a-half or 7 million tons of fuel are needed, I say let us plan on four. Let us plan on four. Let us consider the worst possible circumstances. I always warn the comrades. Let us plan for the worst circumstances. There is a point: The enemy is busy trying to make 1992 a difficult year for us, as difficult as possible. It will try to prevent us from having any market for our products. It will try to prevent us from getting fuel, not even for cash. The enemy is busy, busy everywhere. The enemy is busy in Moscow. Now, the enemy moves around in Moscow. There are many people of the worm pit in Moscow. They are trying to influence the authorities there, making offers, and doing things. They are trying to hurt our economic ties with whatever is left of the USSR. They are trying to block, in every way possible, our effort to get at least one third of the fuel we need to make ends meet.

This means we know how the enemy works to make the blockade more effective and to make our lives more difficult. This is why we must always calculate based on the worst circumstances. Things are a little bit better. They are better. It must be said that the worst is about to come in 1992.

To give you an idea, I just have to say that at the beginning of 1991, commercial agreements already experienced a big drop in the sugar price. It dropped by $300 in 1991.

In spite of all this, there were a series of agreements and industrial objectives under construction and some credits.

According to this year's agreements, we should have received $3.763 billion in merchandise. As of 21 December, we have received $1.673 billion. Traditional imports from the USSR dropped by more than $1 billion and what was left dropped by $2.1 billion. So, if Soviet imports were once $5 billion, now they amount to $1.673 billion. Can you think of a more drastic reduction? Can you think of something more drastic?

To all this we must add the disappearance of trade with the socialist sphere—what we lost when the socialist area ceased to exist, without considering the USSR. We have been suffering since 1990. To all this we must add the Yankees, who are more daring and influential than ever. They are tightening the screws as much as they can. The imperialists and their agents are busy everywhere. This is why I said yesterday: Do you know the USSR disappeared? All those things seemed completely inconceivable. As I have told you on other occasions, it seemed strange when I mentioned that possibility, almost two-and- a-half years ago. It is a very sad reality, but it is a reality. The USSR does not exist.

Imperialism and its agents are there, working to do as much damage to us in this new situation. If they had sugar, they would go to the extreme of giving it away, although imperialists never give away anything. If they had sugar, they would go to the extreme of giving it away so that no one would buy a ton from us. If they could reduce the price of sugar, they would to make our path more difficult. There is little left that can be done to harm us. In 1991, we received $2.1 billion less than we needed. The situation with the fuel shipments was already critical in December.

It might get a little worse, but it is impossible to expect more harm. Now it is our time, because we are not like those common roosters that fly away, speaking in a country style, such as in Pepe's times, we are fighting cocks and fighting cocks do not jump the fence. They do not flee a fight. They fight until the end. We are not a lineage that surrenders, we are another type of people. What could be said of the descendants of Maceo, Maximo Gomez, Agramonte, Cespedes, and Marti. We are their moral and spiritual descendants. We are descendants of Mella and all those who fell in this long struggle, at the Moncada Barracks, in the Granma, in the Sierra Maestra, and in international missions. What could be said about us, spiritual and moral heirs of entire generations that have fallen in the long struggle to have a fatherland, a fatherland with dignity, a fatherland with pride; not that trash, that type of a fatherland we had for more than 50 years because of the Yankees.

What can be expected of us? That we will capitulate, run down our flags, surrender, abandon the struggle? [unidentified speaker shouts: "Never!"] So what can be expected of us is combat. Yes, combat, on any terrain, whether the military terrain, if they succeed in getting together, working out, some kind of provocation or pretext that will ...[rephrase] to intervene, now that the USSR does not even exist. If they were able to work out something, we would have a battle in the military sphere. Their efforts are directed at weakening the revolution, in the first place, wearing it down, causing a split or conflicts, in order for them to then have the ideal conditions for carrying out their plans.

So we have to be prepared for all struggles and carry them out intelligently, very intelligently. The situation we are facing forces us to be very intelligent. We cannot talk about tactics or alternatives here. We have to study an alternative for everything, and know very well what we must do in each situation, each thing, and how to do it. But it is decisive and fundamental to keep up a high morale among revolutionaries, and among the fighting people. The people's fighting spirit, the people's combativeness, is an extremely fundamental factor in the revolution's strategy against the imperialist strategy.

So we must know very well what we must do at all times and in all circumstances. So we must be mentally prepared for the struggle. We belong to a long line of fighters. That is our responsibility. Not only do we belong to a lineage of fighters; we belong to a lineage of winners. [applause] We cannot conceive of anything other than victory. I think life has shown us and has given us examples, many examples, that victory is possible even under very difficult conditions. Because really, in the first stages of the revolution, the first moments of this latest stage after Moncada and Granma, we have passed through some very, very, very difficult moments.

It is a perennial, constant lesson, and one of the most useful ones, that in no circumstances, however difficult they may be, however extremely difficult they may be, should a fighter's morale, a revolutionary's morale drop. I see here some comrades who remind me of feats performed by our comrades in many places at various times, not only at times of very harsh setbacks, such as Moncada or the Granma, but even at times when we were advancing. At a certain time, they sent 10,000 men against us, and we did not even have 300 men to defend our territory. But we defended it, and we defeated that army, which seemed invincible.

When we were walking around in the cane fields there with a few guns, when Raul and I were in Cinco Palmas, really we had gotten together only seven guns. Nothing more—seven guns. We cannot count the bullets and guns we had against that whole army, which had tanks and planes, and millions, and everything. That could have discouraged us. But we must remember the columns led by Camilo [Cienfuegos] and Che [Guevara] that invaded Las Villas. You need courage and daring to cross the whole southern part of that long, former province of Camaguey, full of swamps, marshes, mosquitoes, and in the rainy season a hurricane even caught them along the way. They passed entire days without eating.

But they never declared themselves defeated. They never considered that they would not reach the goal they had set. They set it and they reached it. When we told them to take Havana, they were as sure as I was that they would take it. They were as sure as I was that they would not fire another shot, but they had to be prepared. They had to be prepared. We did not lose a minute; they started off quickly.

We also had times like the famous Bay of Pigs. All the best, most intelligent calculations by the Pentagon, about air total superiority, the OAS prepared, the government prepared, and even so we did not give them a single minute to carry out their plans. We did not stop fighting them. We fought for 68 straight hours, and they were liquidated.

Then there was the October missile crisis, and no one here vacillated when the crisis occurred. I do not remember seeing a single comrade vacillate or become demoralized. We could have disappeared from the map, because at any time something could have exploded. We did not know what might happen, if they might bomb our bases, if someone might fire a rocket. There was a real danger of an atomic, nuclear war. I did not see a single citizen of this country become demoralized or intimidated. We were very indignant when our allies did us the favor of negotiating over there without saying a word to us, and they pledged to withdraw the missiles. We were very indignant, but we did not vacillate. The Yankees were sharpening their teeth, and they said, like now: They are leaving. They are taking away their army and their missiles, and those people will not stand up under the blow to their morale.

But no one became demoralized. We immediately set forth our five points, our demands, and we insisted. When we reached the conviction a few years ago, especially from the time Reagan became U.S. President ....[changes thought] His aggressive plans against Cuba were already known, and we knew that no one was going to help us, and that if one day the Yankees decreed an embargo on us, not a single bullet would enter this country, and no one was ever going to fire a rocket for us. We reached the conviction that the defense of this country depended on our own skin and heart, and no one became demoralized.

We began to develop all the ideas of the all people's war, which were our old ideas, our ideas from the Sierra Maestra, our ideas from the early years of the revolution. We began to rectify, because some doctrines in the military sphere had also done us harm. They made us depart a little from the ideas we had had at the beginning of the revolution, the concepts of the all people's war. Who was going to argue with the Soviets, who had destroyed the Nazi army and waged so many glorious

battles? From Volgograd—which at that time was called Stalingrad, I do not know what it is called now; I think that the Volga River is still called the Volga—from Volgograd to Berlin.

Who was going to argue with them? But the truth is that one day we found ourselves facing the fact that if there was a hostile war by the United States against us, we would have a number of divisions, eight or 10 divisions, in this sector or that one, at the such-and-such offices, and of course we would have the regular army and the reserves, but the people were simply bystanders in that war. It is not that we thought that the people were simply going to be bystanders. We always believed in the people and counted on the people, but we did not have them organized. The truth is that we did not have them organized for the all people's war.

I remember that the prevailing doctrine was the kind of conventional war, Saddam Husayn-style, and who was going to argue with the Soviets? Who knew more than them about military matters? They knew a lot more than us, and they might have known about strategic war, although I am not very sure about that now, after seeing the mistakes they have made. We saw the mistakes they made at the time of the October missile crisis. These were very serious mistakes, gentlemen. I visited some missile bases which could fire starting at 1,000 meters and up, and the Yankee planes could begin to fly below 1,000 meters. There was no way for one of those missiles to hit a Yankee plane. When I saw the air defenses they had, they had a little thing which was one rocket with two launchers, 22-caliber, 25-caliber, with two launchers defending each ....[changes thought] Those disappeared [words indistinct] if the planes flew very close only. They could annihilate the defense and disarm all those missiles. They did not have anything to fire against them.

I saw them make very serious mistakes during the October missile crisis. I saw them make very serious military mistakes. But, well, they have mastered the cosmos, you know how many missiles they have, what accuracy, what range. Who could argue with them? But one day we realized, and we have to thank Reagan especially for this, when he came with his increased threats, when we reached the conviction that in the event of a war or Yankee attack, we were the only ones who would defend ourselves.

There was a brigade here, which as you know, magically became a study center in a matter of hours. I am saying this with all due respect for the Soviet military, and with all due respect for the men of that brigade who have served here. When we go by on the highway to San Antonio, I always look with a lot of respect at that cemetery that holds the remains of the Soviet soldiers who have died serving in Cuba. [applause] I always remember and look at them with great respect. But their leadership has made mistakes. Their leadership has made very serious mistakes.

One day we realized, I repeat, that no one would fire a single—what is it called? The thing the kids set off? [answer indistinct] No, no, not a catapult, [Jorge] Risquet, no, no. It is something that is thrown against the ground and explodes. It is wrapped in ....[answers indistinct] Not caps, firecrackers or something like that, firecrackers. No one would set off even a firecracker for us. We returned with all the necessary force to our old ideas, our concepts of the all people's war. You are witnesses to how the Armed Forces have worked during almost the last 12 years, how the General Staff has worked, how Comrade Raul [Castro] has worked [applause] in preparing the country for war, preparing all the units, preparing the entire people.

What work has been done in these 12 years! It is impressive. It is unlikely that any country could have done what we have done in 12 years and are still doing in the special period. Because even without enough fuel to run a taxi, we are preparing the theater of operations. Even without cement to build some things, we are building fortifications, opening defenses, preparing defenses of all kinds. We are fortifying more than ever, more than we have fortified in any other year of the revolution. What an effort has been made in the defense zones, in the creation of defense zones up to now, with the Territorial Troops Militias! How many tens and hundreds of millions of hours have millions of people devoted to preparing for war!

When we reached the conclusion that the USSR, the former USSR, when it was in the fullness of its power, and had who knows how many missiles and other things, when we reached the conclusion that we could not count on the USSR to defend this country if there was a Yankee invasion, other than with laments and declarations of solidarity and protests ....[changes thought] Of course, the Yankees have more divisions than we do. If you have 10 divisions and put them there ....[rephrases] Let us suppose that you destroy 10 Yankee divisions and they destroy five of yours. Then you destroy another 10, and they destroy your other five. Then they can send 10 more and you do not have any divisions left. It is an arithmetic calculation; everything would be finished.

It is not the same with the people. It is different with the all people's war. That war would never end. (?In those conditions) one or two divisions can be destroyed, and there are dozens and dozens of divisions left. They can occupy one or two cities. They can occupy the whole country, and the day they occupy the whole country they will be worse off than the day they disembarked. Because that day they would have to fight against millions of people, even against adolescents, all mixed up together. The time they mix together with us is when they will be worst off. A division can be annihilated, but you cannot annihilate a people that fights. This has been shown in all wars throughout history. [applause]

The Western Saharans live in a pure desert where there is not even a grass plant. They have been fighting for years and years against 200,000 Moroccan soldiers aided

by the United States. The Saharans are stronger than ever. Now there is a plebiscite process to ...[rephrases] and they are trying to make it so that they will not be deceived, so that other people will not be brought to vote there, disguised as Saharans. They are fighting so that their heroic war will lead them to liberation. The Algerians fought against the whole French Air Force and Army, which was very powerful. The Vietnamese fought against all the military might of the United States.

No people that have fought on any terrain, and continued to fight, have ever been conquered. They cannot be conquered. We must make the cost so high that the imperialists will not be able to pay it. We already know this. When everything is victory, when everything is easy, there is applause, jingoism, parties. When the imperialist soldiers begin to die, everything changes. Everything changes. [repeats] The ideal thing for the empire in a war against us is a conventional, classical war, of divisions against divisions. But we set that concept aside a long time ago, and we have been working to prepare the people for the struggle, in accordance with the doctrine of the all people's war. I think we have developed it a lot.

We did not become discouraged, but rather we set to work hard. We have spent 12 years working hard. That is how a revolutionary people has to react. That is how the revolution has to react. None of these problems are new for us. These problems have become hard because under normal peacetime conditions we have to meet the needs of 10.5 million inhabitants. That is our responsibility. It is not a question of having to go up and down mountains, walk more or walk less, fire more shots or fire less. That might even be easier. Rather, the problem is that, as a revolution in power, we have to meet the needs and interests of the entire population. We are facing a different kind of problems, but no problem has ever discouraged or demoralized us.

I said two-and-a-half years ago that if one day we woke up to the news that the USSR no longer existed we would continue to defend the revolution and socialism. They knew what I was saying, and they were not worried. Everything that has happened in that country with so much history and glory, so many merits, so many services it has provided to humanity, is very bitter. We clearly saw the consequences of everything that was happening, the consequences it would have for us, and that the revolution and the country were going to be left in a difficult, very difficult situation.

But we had to do what we are doing, exactly what we are doing; enter the special period in peacetime, implement the appropriate measures, prepare ourselves for an even more difficult phase, conscious that we are reaching the limit—as I said before—of the damage that can be done to us. But what the comrades are doing everywhere, what the comrades are doing in Las Tunas, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Pinar del Rio, all the provinces, Cienfuegos, Holguin, everywhere, Guantanamo, mobilizing thousands of horses and carts and carriages for taxis and preparing, as has been shown here today when I asked the comrades if they were ready and prepared to face the most complicated and critical special period, if they can feed the population, and if they can solve all these problems.

This is what we must do, and this is what we are doing. As I said before, it is much easier in the provinces than in the capital. We have more complicated problems in the capital because of the concentration of 2.1 million inhabitants here. But we have to manage also. We have been working on this. So almost 500,000 bicycles have been distributed. But in addition, there are dozens and dozens of agricultural camps, thousands and thousands of people mobilized, 32 contingents, an entire planting program, which as I said, is going to free the provinces from the tribute they have had to pay to the capital, by sending tubers here. We are still receiving some. We are still receiving some. [repeats] These great, ambitious plans that are being carried out in the capital require a minimum of time, but we have been working.

As the situation becomes more difficult, we will work more. We will do more and more things. Many comrades are working, doing the work that must be done. We are not getting discouraged. We are not getting demoralized. We cannot become demoralized. We are doing what must be done. Among the things that must be done is keeping up morale. We must not forget that. We must keep up the morale of the party members and youth, in the first place. We must keep up the morale of the masses. We must keep up the morale of the revolutionaries. Nothing that may occur should harm us, because nothing worse can happen. No difficulty should discourage us, because the difficulties cannot get much greater. They inevitably originate from everything that has happened.

That is the great responsibility of this National Assembly of the People's Government [ANPP], and the great responsibility of each one of you. Each one of you must examine your consciences about this. It is true that we do not all have the same amount of responsibility. Some of us have more, and others have less. It is true that not all of us have the same amount of energy. Some of us have less and some more. Some of us are older and some are younger. It is true we may all have had some lapse, or some problem or other, but we are linked together in a single cause, a great cause. Fate, history, life, have given this responsibility to each of us.

The top cadres of the party, government, and ANPP are present here, and we have very great tasks. We have well-analyzed and thought out programs, food program in the first place. That is the number one program. There are the scientific and technical programs, and all that. There are programs aimed at preventing our populace from going hungry. All our foreign trade is also directed today to getting our country the minimum amount of fuel needed ...[corrects himself] or first, the necessary

food, the the minimum amount of fuel needed, medicines, and if possible soap and toothpaste and those essential things for living. So our foreign trade is aiming its efforts in that direction.

Another effort such as those I have mentioned are efforts to increase our income, to increase exports through new products that have potential, quite a lot of potential, and through tourism, which has quite a lot of potential, and also through other traditional products. Among other things, now we have the sugar harvest. That is one of our most difficult challenges. It brings us all together. Now there is the planting of what are called the winter season products, the sugar harvest, the sugar harvest, [repeats] and other harvests. It think it is very good that if we do not have cement or materials, there are tens of thousands of people from the Ministry of Construction now working in agriculture. I think what the Santiago residents have done is excellent. The textile factory is a magnificent example. I said that a few days ago. Wherever there is a chance, we must put a man or women to do something useful.

Of course, our standards are the most just. We do not leave a single citizen unprotected. We do not leave a single citizen, university graduate, or middle-level technician who graduates, to his fate. We do not leave anyone to their fate. No socialist country can do that. This can be done only by a ....[rephrases] A capitalist country could not do that. Only a socialist system could do what we are doing, with this principle of distributing what we have among all of us, as in a family.

That is not the only thing we are doing. There are many other things that have arisen, among the things I have mentioned from the economic point of view. There are many other possibilities—I have talked about this—so that the factories will not be idle, to use our labor force and machinery as long as it is possible. Of course, there are periods of adjustment. There are periods of adjustment. [repeats] We are now in a difficult period of adjustment. We must ensure the minimum of fuel so that the lights will not go out, or so that they will go out as little as possible. There is a difficult period of adjustment, and this adjustment period is now, in 1992.

But there are many ideas and we are working in many directions to find solutions to the problems. Now, we will unquestionably have to undergo limitations. This is inevitable. We have to go through a period of sacrifices. You can see how up to now we have been able to keep all schools and hospitals in operation. You can see how even this year, when we have received thousands of millions [not further specified] less, infant mortality is at more or less the same level as last year. According to the figures, it is maybe two-tenths higher, three-tenths higher. It was 10.7 last year and may be 10.9 or 11 this year. We still do not have the final figures. This is incredible. A country that has had problems with soap, clothes, 20 products of all kinds, has kept infant mortality at that level. Now we will see how our doctors, nurses, hospitals, and everyone will work to maintain that rate. If it rises, we will try so that it will rise only the minimum amount, in order to maintain our health indexes, to maintain our schools in operations.

The teachers have shown extraordinary willingness to maintain education under any circumstances in the special period. The scientists, technicians, skilled workers, engineers, everyone, are willing. They presented 34,000 papers, 40,000 solutions at the forum. It is incredible what this beehive, this anthill—which is what our country is today—is capable of doing. We have to maintain all this in the special period.

You can imagine how our transportation problems have become more complicated. It may be that we will have to reduce the number of bus trips before we have more bicycles, because this falling appart [desmerengamiento] has been occurring at an even faster pace. Any meringue would have lasted a little longer. This collapse has been very quick, very rapid. As we have said, if some of the things that have occurred had taken four or five years to happen, how many problems would we have solved? If it had been a bit slower ...[rephrases] but it happened too fast, and it has created some imbalances in our programs. We must be prepared for imbalances. You, who lead the people, and lead the party members, and lead the mass organizations, must prepare them for all these contingencies and especially for the more critical situations that will arise.

I said: How much would we have done if this catastrophe had not happened? Someday we will express ourselves in a different way, and we will say: We have done so much thanks to this catastrophe. Someday the equation will be inverted. Next to the satisfaction of having gone through this test, we will be able to count up all that we have done. Most of these things that many of our comrades marvel at have come from the special period. A lot of the things that we are obtaining now will have a great value even during times when we have resources and fuel.

I hope that we never return to wasting things as we used to when there were 70,000 or 80,000 tractors available for agriculture. We had batteries, tires, and fuel for these tractors and they were constantly in use. How are we going to learn to be austere, to conserve, and use our resourses wisely? We do not know what the intelligence of millions or hundreds of thousands of people working and creating is worth. I will not say that we will ever be joyful about the misfortune that has occurred in the socialist bloc, but for us as a country, in the end, it will bring extraordinarily favorable results. We will attain the most complete independence that could have ever been attained.

Today we have complete political independence, but cannot say that we have complete economic independence. Today, we can say that we have enough courage and willingness to undergo all types of hardships. Someday we will have a developed economy under these conditions, which will allow us to solve all the problems that we may want to solve. A little while ago I said that

the greatest wealth we have is the minds and intelligence of our people. The brain is a fabulous natural resource. It cannot be exhausted like oil, for example, but it multiplies itself. Oil may be very important, but it is more important to have brains than to have oil.

In fact, there are developed countries, very developed countries, that do not have oil. It does not matter. It is possible that we may come across some oil—that possibility has not been ruled out—on land or mainly at sea. That idea has not been ruled out, but we cannot count on that for now. What we do have is our people's brains, which are a resource that instead of running out multiplies itself. I say and I repeat that it is more important to have brains as a natural resource than to have oil.

With that resource, which is our people's intelligence which we have planted in their hearts and minds for 30 years, we will move forward. We will move forward, there is no doubt, first slowly and then faster. Do not think that our neighbors are happier than us. They have a tremendous recession. They have lost their dream because they have violated all the principles of their economy and they are beginning to pay the price for the violations that they have committed. There is a great uneasiness in the governing circles in the United States because of the very real economic recession. In moments of the euphoria, in moments when the socialist bloc is collapsing, in moments of the hegemony, an economic recession has come to ruin their party.

The problems in the world are there to be seen. We will see how problems of Third World countries will worsen. We will see how there will be fierce competition between the great economic blocs in the world. We will see how poverty will increase in a great part of the world. At that time, we will be coming out of our most difficult time. That is the way these events will take place. Awareness plays a very important role in this struggle; ideology plays a decisive role.

This morning, we were analyzing this here. What does each person think? How do our enemies think and move? How do they try to work? How much hypocrisy there is in some of our underhanded enemies! For some time now we have known how they think. [Carlos] Aldana explained this to us, how they are always on the lookout, like vultures, to see just when they can fall upon the revolution. They look for the soft parts, the weak individuals, the potential imperialism can count on inside the country, using the most negative and least patriotic individuals, using the cowardly and demoralized individuals. That is why the ideological issue has enormous importance.

We should never give up ground in ideology. We should never give up ground in combativity and fighting spirit. Never allow anyone to do so. Remember that in every man there is always a little bit of pride. Life has taught us this, especially in war, even when we saw men make mistakes. There have even been cases of men who were frightened and later showed impressive, reckless courage. We need to know how to incite the pride of each human being. Do not worry, because when it seems that there is nothing left in a revolutionary, there will always be a bit of pride, and you can do a lot with that little bit of pride.

We can say that our people are a people full of traditions and a worthy people. We have traditions of dignity, traditions of courage, traditions of honor. One swallow does not make a summer. We know that there will always be that kind of swallows. There will always be the shameful cases of people who degenerate, who weaken, who get frightened or tired. There will always be those cases. But we must learn to look at these cases philosophically. I can assure you that for every one of those there are at least 10 who have an impressive level of dinity, honor, and pride. [applause]

Let us never forget that this was the country which did the most generous international missions. This was the country that offered hundreds of thousands of men. Every time there was an internationalist mission hundreds of thousands would volunteer. Look at what kind of spirit our people were educated in! They are willing to fulfill their duty no matter how difficult the mission might be. Let us not forget that the remains of the vast majority of those comrades are here in our native land. A monument has been built in each municipality in their honor. The monuments are simple and modest. Maybe someday we will be able to build better monuments in memory of those men that taught us so much through their example.

Let us not forget that they are our dead, our dead. [repeats] Those are the remains of our comrades. There are many remains spread all over the island since the beginning of the war in 1868. Those are our remains, from more than 30 years of revolution, since Moncada and the Granma, throughout all our struggles. Many schools bear the names of those martyrs. Many factories, buildings, farms, and enterprises bear the names of those glorious comrades who fell.

There are those who are talking over there about dividing up the country among themselves, or they are dividing it up over there—sugar mills, lands, houses, schools—those who dream of taking everything once again and assigning an owner to everything, a private owner to everything. It is clear that none of us can even resign ourselve to thinking about that. It is clear that this will not happen while there is even a single one of us, a revolutionary, a man or woman of pride, alive. [applause]

Now I ask myself, what will they do with the memory ... [corrects himself] or what would they do with the memory of our glorious dead? What would they do with the tombs that we have built for them throughout the country? What would they do with those memorials or those modest tombstones that run alongside the road to the Bay of Pigs and remind us of those who fell on 17, 18, and 19 April in the Bay of Pigs fighting? Or those who

fell in the Escambray? What would they do with our dead? What would that horde of people full of hate and vengeance do?

That horde of reactionary people would not want the smallest symbol of the revolution to remain in the country. What would they turn our schools into? Into cabarets or brothels? What would they do with the schools in rural areas? What would they do with our social centers ...[corrects himself] I mean, our child care centers or our special schools? What would they do with our universities? What would they do with our hundreds of teachers? What would they do with our tens of thousands of doctors or our hundreds of thousands of university-graduate professionals? What would they do with our young people? What would they do with our adolescents? What would be their fate?

What would they do with the women of this country? What would they do with our proletariat or working class? What would they do with those who fought during these 30 years defending the revolution in the party, the youth organization, the Federation of University Students, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the labor unions, the farmers associations? What would they do? What would they do with the remains of our dead?

Because we already know what they would do with the nation's symbols; they would vilely hand them over to our enemies. They would give our nation, our land, our waters, our natural resources, and the blood and sweat of our people to the empire. They would give our land to the empire. They would have an emblem. The world is full of emblems that do not mean a thing. We are infested, full of flags, many of which mean very little, unfortunately.

We know what our duties are, with all these memories. We have great things to defend, very sacred values to fight for, and an extraordinary cause to die for.

Who would want to live? Would anyone who has a little bit of honor and pride ever resign themselves to that fate? It would be better for us to have one shirt for five years, or to watch less television, or even stop watching television. [applause] It would be better for us to forget about our tastes when there are so many things at stake. I have spoken of Cuba alone. I have not spoken of the world, because the world expects us to know how to rise to the occasion. Everyone tells us this.

The world expects us to be capable of resisting. The revolutionary movement and the revolutionaries of the world expect that of us. Our ideas expect that of us; our flags expect that of us. We are a symbol today, and we are playing a role that we did not seek but that came to us. We must carry it out. We are a hope. We are a trench of Latin American independence, as the declaration which was approved here today said. We are a trench of the just causes of this world.

As I said recently, heroism and courage are admired and not looked upon with pity. We do not need anyone's pity. We do not want them to give us advice or come to tell us what to do. We do not want anyone to feel pity for us. Pity is for those who have lost their honor and pride. [applause] Pity can be felt for those who die in vain or who die of sickness or old age without having done anything worthwhile in their lives. Death is inevitable for all of us. It is a natural law. I wish all of us could die of natural causes. We would not want anyone's death to arrive even one second early. But we would not want to wish anyone a second of life without honor, nation, or dignity. [applause]

That is why no one will have any reason to feel pity for us. Nor will anyone have any reason to be ashamed of us. Nor will anyone have any reason to say that we became discouraged, that we became demoralized, that we surrendered, that we abandoned our ideas, that we abandoned our flag. No one will ever have any reason to say any of those things. Cuban revolutionaries ....[changes thought] No one will have to endure the disdain of others. Traitors are despised. Those who have pride and know how to defend their ideas to the end are saluted with admiration, with hats off.

That is why I am expressing here my conviction that this generation of Cubans, and those who come afterwards, and those who came before us, will be respected and admired. They will always have to recognize that we were able to fight in the most incredibly difficult conditions, that we were willing to give everything to defend everything that we hold sacred, that we were able to give everything for victory. Because if we act as we should act, if we conduct ourselves as we should conduct ourselves, and as I am sure we will, victory is the only possible end result. [applause]

Let it never be said of any of us present, of those who make up this ANPP, or even of our guests, let it never be said that a single one of us wavered. [applause] Let it never be said that a single one became demoralized. Let it never be said that a single one sold out. Let it never be said of any of us who are witnesses to this historic moment we are experiencing, let it never be said that we were not capable of fighting and that we were not capable of dying for the nation, for the revolution, and for socialism. [applause]

Socialism or death, fatherland or death, we will win. [applause]

Let us go to work now. I wish you a heroic, glorious, and successful 1992. [applause]

Raul Castro Tours Army Tank, Chemical Units

FL0101131592 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] After the end of the meeting of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [Minfar] Military Council, which evaluated the results of 1991, Army General Raul

Castro Ruz, the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR] minister, toured the facilities of a large Western Army tank unit. During his year-end visit, which has already become a tradition of the FAR chiefs, Raul observed the preparations by the small units to celebrate another anniversary of the triumph of the revolution, and he spoke with the young combatants and their families.

He was accompanied on his tour by Division General Leopoldo Cintra Frias, the chief of the Western Army and a Politburo member; Division General Joaquin Quinta Sola, chief of the Central Army; Division General Ramon Espinosa Martin, chief of the Eastern Army; Division General Rigoberto Garcia Fernandez, chief of the Youth Labor Army; Sixto Batista Santana, the coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution; Brigadier General Felix Baranda Columbie, chief of a Minfar Directorate; and Colonel Rolando Alfonso Borges, chief of the FAR Main Political Directorate. All of the latter are Central Committee members.

This year, in addition to the combatants' enthusiasm, it is noteworthy how the celebration of the 33d anniversary of the triumph of the revolution has been ensured with products from the units' self-sufficiency gardens.

Later, in response to an invitation from a previous tour, the FAR minister visited a chemical defense regiment, where he lunched with its members. In a lively chat, he analyzed with the personnel pages of the war diary reflecting the daily revolutionary actions by the guerrillas in the final days of 1956 and on 1 January 1957. The visit was marked by a constant demonstration of the firmness and determination with which our combatants have confronted this year and are preparing to confront the coming year.

[Begin Raul Castro recording] Fidel spread the insurrection to half of the Sierra Maestra and multiplied by several times the forces under his command. It has been 35 years since then, and I think it is symbolic that this magnificent meeting here today has gathered together the three generations that carried out, defended, and continue to defend the revolution. Finally, I want to convey to you our thanks once again, on behalf of those accompanying me and myself, and a very strong hug from our dear commander in chief. Fatherland or death, we will win. [applause] [end recording]

New Ration Book Sales Schedule Begins 6 Jan

FL0101131892 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 2037 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Text] In light of current circumstances, a new 42-day cycle sales calendar will be implemented starting 6 January 1992, and the number of priority days for working women will be increased to four. Consumers, which are divided into six purchasing groups, will be identified by the letters A, B, C, D, E, and F, which appear in the ration books for manufactured products. On Monday, 6 January, only the group of B1 working women can make purchases; on Tuesday it will be the B2 group, also for working women. On Wednesday all consumers can make purchases. On Thursday the B3 and on Friday the B4 groups of workers can make purchases, and on Saturday consumers with those letters. [sentence as heard]

The information note from the Ministry of Interior Commerce adds that working women are required to present their identification cards and manufactured products ration books to make purchases on their designated days.

El Salvador

Guerrillas Predict 31 Dec Peace Agreement

PA3112182291 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1648 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Text] United Nations, 31 Dec (EFE)—Salvadoran guerrillas predicted on 31 December that an agreement will be reached this afternoon with the government on a permanent cease-fire, the creation of a new civilian national police force, and other issues to end the 11-year-old civil war in that country.

"It is a struggle against time," Joaquin Villalobos, one of the five "commanders" of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), said on his return to the United Nations after a brief recess in the marathon negotiations with the government that lasted almost through the night of 30 December and the early morning hours of 31 December.

The deadline for an agreement in this round of negotiations, which began on 16 December, expires on the afternoon of 31 December, because this is the last day of Javier Perez de Cuellar's mandate as the head of the United Nations. Perez de Cuellar, a Peruvian, has spared no effort in promoting an agreement to end the war that has cost 75,000 lives in El Salvador during the past 11 years.

It is believed that the agreements will be announced sometime after 1500 or 1600 (2000 or 2100 GMT).

Salvador Samayoa, a member of the FMLN's negotiating commission, said that it is "possible to agree on a cease-fire," although there will be a problem due to a lack of time.

Samayoa said that it is "very likely" that very important, "irreversible," and "practically final agreements," will also be reached regarding the national civilian police and FMLN participation in Salvadoran political life.

"We are making a great effort to try to settle everything," Villalobos said. He added that on 30 December, great progress was made on the separation of forces and the police force, in which the guerrillas want to have a significant part.

Salvadoran Government sources agreed that there are only a few details left to be resolved to conclude the negotiations on the cease-fire and socioeconomic issues (including the final outcome of the lands in the areas occupied by the rebels), and noted that the national civilian police issue is practically solved.

Roberto Canas, spokesman for the rebels' negotiating commission, predicted that there would be "a broad agreement." He noted that the date of the cease-fire would have to be fixed, as well as the date for signing the protocols.

Canas also said that the demilitarization of El Salvador has yet to be established; that is, the reduction of the Armed Forces and the FMLN's "reconversion" or demobilization.

Canas stressed that the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (Copaz), comprised of representatives from the government, the FMLN, and two political parties; which will be broadened with representatives from the church and Onusal (UN Observers for El Salvador) as observers, will play a crucial role. Through Copaz, he noted, the "civilian society" will control and verify—on a national level—the fulfillment of the agreements.

If the above mentioned agreements are signed today in New York, as everything seems to indicate, Canas added that this would mean that the parties agree to the end the conflict. Nevertheless, he warned that "the big battle to implement the agreements and the struggle between the new and the old that will resist changes," still has to be waged.

Cristiani UN News Conference Rescheduled

PA0101004292 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 2330 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Text] [Unidentified reporter] We have a last minute report. President Alfredo Cristiani's news conference was supposed to be broadcast in a national radio and television network at 1730 [2330 GMT] but, according to a report from New York, the national network has just been suspended because there are apparently some last minute problems in the negotiations. We now contact Ricardo Gomez in New York. Ricardo, what happened?

[Gomez] Approximately two minutes ago the UN secretary general's spokesman said President Cristiani's news conference had been rescheduled and that it will be held two hours later. We were quite concerned because we realized that no agreements had been signed—or that an agreement had been reached. This means that the negotiations continue and the participants are probably trying to overcome an impasse.

[Reporter] Ricardo, what problems may have arisen at the last minute?

[Gomez] We understand that the national civil police issue has been fully defined. We understand that the issue of Armed Forces reductions has also been defined. It seems that the issues which have yet to be defined concern the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front's participation in politics after the war and socioeconomic issues. This is probably where the problems may have arisen. However, the UN secretary general is apparently talking with President Cristiani and trying to solve them.

I would like to mention that William Walker, the U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, came down to the UN headquarters lobby approximately 40 minutes ago. He

said that considerable progress has been made and that many people feel optimistic—only a few feel pessimistic. The phrase may mean many things. He also said the government delegation would leave at 1830 or 1930, after the news conference, and this is what caused concern among the media. We have now been told that the event was rescheduled. This means that the negotiations will continue and that it is possible to solve any problems that may have arisen.

[Reporter] Ricardo, other interesting things should have been mentioned, but it seems this is no longer worthwhile because the news conference has been suspended. The UN secretary general had promised the participants that he would exert himself to the utmost. We thought it inappropriate to mention this because then one of the two parties might be blamed for the talks' failure. Since the negotiations have been extended there is no need to talk about this. Ricardo, we will remain alert to any new reports from the United Nations.

[Gomez] Okay, we will stick around. As I said, we were somewhat concerned but we have seen how the participants, as well as the UN secretary general and all his team, are exerting themselves to the utmost. Friendly nations and the U.S. representatives are also exerting themselves. Everyone is trying to solve any last minute problems that may have arisen. We will remain alert to any further developments and we will contact you immediately. That is all for now.

More on Delayed News Conference

PA0101032392 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0155 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] United Nations, 31 Dec (EFE)—Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani has again postponed his news conference, at which he was scheduled to announce the results of UN-mediated negotiations with guerrilla representatives. The negotiations have been extended because of last minute obstacles.

A government spokesman said Cristiani's meeting with the media—first scheduled for 1830 (2330 GMT 31 December) and later postponed until 2030 (0130 GMT 1 January)—has been postponed until further notice.

Javier Perez de Cuellar, who will leave the post of UN secretary general at 0000, this afternoon decided to postpone his trip to the Caribbean to give a last push to the search for an agreement that will end 11 years of war in El Salvador. He would like the agreement to mark the end of his 10 years at the United Nations.

It seems that the last minute disagreements are centered on the distribution of land in zones controlled by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the reduction of the Salvadoran Armed Forces, and the guerrillas' participation in politics.

Given that Perez de Cuellar's UN term ends at 0000 on 1 January—when he will be replaced by Egyptian Butrus Ghali—it is believed that this is the final deadline to reach an agreement during the round of talks that began on 16 December.

Rebel Commander Says Peace Agreements Imminent

PA0101044192 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0414 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] San Salvador, 31 Dec (ACAN-EFE)—A Salvadoran guerrilla leader asserted on 31 December that the negotiations with the government, currently underway in New York, will conclude this very same day with important agreements that will be announced shortly, before 1991 ends.

Gerson Martinez, a member of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) Political Committee, telephoned a radio station in San Salvador and said that "following some problems that arose earlier this evening at the (negotiating) table, the talks are going along much faster."

The rebel leader explained that there were some discrepancies concerning the Armed Forces' reduction and the schedule to implement the agreement, "but we are now quite close to a consensus."

"We want to announce at this time of festivity, expectations, and happiness that, after almost 8,000 days of armed struggle, 4,000 days of civil war, and practically 630 days of negotiations, our efforts have brought us close to achieving a solution," Martinez asserted.

Government, FMLN Reach Cease-Fire Agreement

PA0101055192 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 0532 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] Late this evening, 31 December, the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front reached a cease-fire agreement that will be implemented on 1 February, following 12 years of war in El Salvador. The negotiations will resume on 5 January to agree on a calendar for implementing the peace agreements. Positive results must be achieved no later than 10 January so the agreements can be signed in Mexico on 16 January.

FMLN Front Welcomes New York Peace Agreement

PA0101130992 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 0610 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Communique issued by the Modesto Ramirez Front of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, FMLN, on the peace agreement signed in New York]

[Text] The Modesto Ramirez Southern [as heard] Front, its leaders, officers, and fighters hereby welcome the agreements made between the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] and the Salvadoran Government. We call upon the Salvadoran people to consider these agreements as their own, and as such to

ensure that they are observed. From this moment on, we are proclaiming a celebration throughout the Southern Front.

Signed by the Modesto Ramirez Southern Front.

Rebel Commander Assesses Peace Agreement

PA0201021692 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2055 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] Mexico City, 1 Jan (NOTIMEX)—The Salvadoran guerrilla organizations said on 1 January that the future purge of the Armed Forces and the dissolution of the country's security corps as a result of the "New York agreement," represents "a harsh blow to the government."

Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] Commander Mercedes del Carmen Letona told NOTIMEX that one of the most important points in the overall peace agreement "is the dissolution of the army's structure in El Salvador."

The government and the guerrilla organizations signed the "New York agreement" in the first minutes of 1992, thus ending a war that lasted more than 11 years and resulted in 75,000 deaths.

Letona said: "It will be a harsh blow to the government because it has to dissolve all its repressive organizations. The FMLN is satisfied about this point because it was a key issue in the negotiations."

She said the dissolution includes 18,000 National Guard, Treasury Police, Customs Police, and National Police members.

It also includes 15,000 members of the civilian defense groups operating in neighborhoods and rural zones, and the officers and troops of five elite Armed Forces battalions.

The parties agreed that the cease-fire will become effective on 1 February 1992 and it will end on 31 October. "We can rightfully say on 1 January that we are on the road to peace," Letona said.

She added that the inclusion of FMLN commanders and former fighters in the new National Civil Police (PNC) is another "important" achievement within the negotiations.

Letona said the schedule for the agreements signed by the parties at UN headquarters "will meet no major problems because there is already a pledge from the government and the guerrilla organizations."

Letona emphasized the "positive role" played by the U.S. Government in the round of talks, as well as the role played by Mexico, Colombia, Spain, and Venezuela, which are members of the group of outgoing UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar's friends.

The guerrilla commander termed as "essential the presence of Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and Defense Minister Rene Ponce because valuable time was being squandered at the negotiating table."

"It was a substantial and fruitful agreement, and it yielded decisive results to end the war in the country," Letona asserted.

'Peace Document' Notes Timetable for Agreements

PA0101135092 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 0515 GMT 1 Jan 92

["Peace Document" signed by the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, FMLN, in New York on 31 December; read by reporter Ricardo Gomez at the United Nations—live]

[Text] The Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] hereby declare that they have reached substantive, definite agreement on the following topics: the armed forces, the national civilian police, the judicial system, the electoral system, economic and social issues, and the political participation of the FMLN.

These agreements, with those signed already in San Jose, Mexico, and New York, culminate the negotiations on all substantive topics of the Caracas Agenda and the brief New York negotiation. The implementation of the agreement will put a definite end to the Salvadoran armed conflict.

An agreement has also been reached on all technical-military aspects of the separation and suspension of the armed confrontation. This involves the end of the FMLN military structure and the reincorporation of its members, within a framework of full legality, into the civilian, political, and institutional life of the country.

The parties have also agreed that the armed confrontation will officially be suspended beginning on 1 February 1992 and ending on 31 October 1992.

The parties will meet again on 5 January 1992 in order to negotiate a timetable for the implementation of the agreements and for the method to be followed to end the FMLN military structure and to reincorporate its members, within a framework of full legality, into the civilian, political, and institutional life of the country. These negotiations must have positive results no later than 10 January 1992. If this does not occur, the parties vow to accept the formula for unresolved issues that will be presented by the UN secretary general no later than 14 January 1992. The final peace agreements will be signed in Mexico City on 16 January 1992.

The parties vow to maintain the necessary climate to continue to promote the unilateral decisions they have made in order to avoid any military activity.

[Issued] New York, 31 December 1991

[Signed] Representing the Salvadoran Government: Oscar Santamaria, Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, and David Escobar Galindo.

Representing the FMLN: Commanders Shafik Handal, Francisco Jovel, Salvador Sanchez Ceren, Eduardo Sancho, and Joaquin Villalobos.

Representing the UN secretary general: Alvaro de Soto

Bomb Destroys Foreign Correspondents' Vehicles

PA0101064392 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 0620 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Report by Raul Beltran at the Camino Real Hotel in San Salvador—live]

[Text] We begin this new year with an unpleasant report. The international media has been the target of an attack at the parking lot of the Camino Real Hotel. Two [figure as heard] vehicles owned by international press agency correspondents have been destroyed by an explosion at the Camino Real Hotel parking lot. One vehicle was owned by the Inter-Press Service correspondent, another one was owned by the REUTERS news agency correspondent, and another one was owned by the NEW YORK TIMES correspondent. The vehicles were destroyed by the explosion. The firemen's corps sent a unit but nothing could be done because the vehicles were destroyed.

Attack Repudiated

PA0201023092 Paris AFP in Spanish 2235 GMT 1 Jan 92

[Text] San Salvador, 1 Jan (AFP)— The Association of Foreign Correspondents in El Salvador (SPCA) has expressed its "strong repudiation" for the 1 January dynamite attack at the Camino Real Hotel, during which several press vehicles were destroyed. The attack, which opposition political leaders have blamed on the death squads, destroyed Martin Lanfield's vehicle. Lanfield, who was at the hotel at the time of the attack, is president of the SPCA and a REUTER correspondent.

The powerful explosion also destroyed three other vehicles, including the one owned by U.S. newspaper THE NEW YORK TIMES. The attack was carried out at the very moment the peace agreements reached between the government of President Alfredo Cristiani and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front were being announced in El Salvador.

Following the attack, the homes of Daniel Alder, UPI correspondent, and Thomas Long, CBS Radio correspondent a contributor to THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE MIAMI HERALD, were raided by unidentified persons.

In November, Lanfield was chased by unidentified armed persons who intercepted him in northern San Salvador.

The SPCA deplores that these incidents occurred only weeks after three foreign correspondents received written death threats. The SPCA expresses concern that these attacks are being carried out by groups that are interested in launching a campaign to sabotage the peace that is being attained by the Salvadoran people.

"Once again correspondents have become mistaken targets of attacks that will not make us forget our work of informing the local and foreign communities from our respective view points on the incidents that are occurring," the SPCA stressed.

President Holds News Conference in New York

PA0101160792 San Salvador Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 0541 GMT 1 Jan 92

[News conference by Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani with unidentified international reporters at UN headquarters in New York City—live]

[Text] [Cristiani] Before accepting your questions, allow me to use the media to say a few words to the Salvadoran people in particular as the year concludes in El Salvador and a new one begins here in New York, in the United States, which constitutes an extremely important moment for the Salvadoran people and for the future of the country.

After 15 or 16 days of very hard work by the negotiating committees of the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN], we can say with great pleasure that 1991 will end with the signing of a document that definitely ends the conflict in El Salvador. We believe there is only one winner in this long trek, and especially in this decade of suffering and sorrow for the Salvadoran people. That winner is the Salvadoran people, who with great stoicism, courage, and patience have been able to withstand all the vicissitudes along the way and to remain firmly attached to their hopes for peace in our country.

Today, we are very pleased to announce that the Salvadoran people have again succeeded in the face of a historic challenge—attaining peace for the benefit of all Salvadorans. We want to say that the signing of this New York Agreement—if we again want to call it by the name of the place where it is signed—is the beginning of a new era for our country, a stage of reconstruction and reconciliation of Salvadoran society for the benefit of progress, democracy, and liberty in our country.

Before concluding, I want to thank UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who as the sponsor of the process, was able to sign this document, perhaps the last document he signed as secretary general in a brilliant career that culminated with this effort, which had been going on for nearly two years. The Salvadoran people and government are thankful to him and to his representatives for those long days of work.

Of course, we must also voice the same appreciation to the governments of the countries that form part of the Group of Friends, such as Colombia, Mexico, Spain, and Venezuela, who at all times have been devoting their efforts to promote the process and to guide it to this moment, the moment when we begin a new era for our country. Of course, we thank our commission, which has worked hard for over two years in a long process that—thank The Lord—we can culminate with this historic step for El Salvador at the end of 1991.

Friends in the media, I beg you to forgive me for having behaved like a hermit for three days, but we thought it was important to prevent a situation where positions that could very well be solved at the table, could sometimes become more difficult to handle in negotiations when they are made public. Therefore, I apologize for not being available for you until now, and for having left the building through the basement in an effort to not give any information that might entail problems for us.

Thank The Lord everything has concluded well. I hope you understand me for not having been available for you. I will be very pleased now to answer any questions you may have.

[Reporter, in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish] On behalf of the United Nations Correspondents' Association, I would like to welcome you to this news conference and warmly congratulate you on the signing of the agreement. At the same time, I would like to wish you and the Salvadoran people a happy new year. My question is how is this agreement going to affect the political climate of the region?

[Cristiani] I believe that the Central American political situation has definitely taken another step forward in the process of the stabilization and democratization we have been trying to promote in the region. Peace and democracy have been the short-term objectives of all countries in the Central American region since 1987, when the Esquipulas II plan began. There were then three countries concurrently confronting internal problems. Nowadays, thank God, we can say that two of those countries have been able to solve their respective problems. We hope the Republic of Guatemala will be able to solve its difficulties in the short-term, because we are aware of the efforts undertaken by President Serrano. We believe that regional stability not only creates new political perspectives, but also new economic and social opportunities.

Despite the lack of evidence of any concrete final results, we embarked on the task of seeking economic, political and social integration for the Central American region. As stability spreads throughout the region, the potential for integration will also tend to increase and become more dynamic. We personally feel very relieved. We think it will result in a significant step forward for the Salvadoran people. We are also sure that the Central America region as a whole will benefit from the resolution of our armed conflict, which has been going on for more than a decade.

[Reporter] Mr. President, to what extent will the signing of an agreement diminish U.S. military assistance to your government, which to my understanding has amounted to approximately $3.5 billion in the past six years?

[Cristiani] We have stated that when the armed conflict in El Salvador was resolved, we would then have to give priority attention to the social and economic areas. In other words, we now have to look at rebuilding our country, which has undergone significant destruction and misfortune during the past decade. We are aware that El Salvador has benefited from military assistance, which once was very necessary in order to defend the democratic institution flourishing in El Salvador against those who at one time believed they could take political power through armed violence.

At this time I would like to take a moment to express my acknowledgment to all members of the FMLN and its high command for their courage in following this process to its completion and for signing this agreement today. We know very well that it was not an easy step for them, but we also realize that the step they have taken will definitely benefit El Salvador.

[Reporter] Mr. President, the documents signed on 31 December include a date for the end of the confrontation and a date for the signing of the final agreements. The final agreements, (?that have been mentioned) here, such as the reduction of the army, the socioeconomic reform [words indistinct]. Where is the agreement? Where is it?

[Cristiani] Logically, they are here at the United Nations for safekeeping. The substantive negotiation of all the topics that were originally drafted in the Caracas agenda—three of which resulted in agreements that were already signed: one on human rights, one on constitutional reforms, and one on judicial matters—as well as the agreements reached in the most recent meetings, with topics contained in the brief agenda [agenda comprimida]—a name given to this agenda after the agreement signed in New York in September 1991—show that all of the topics included in these two agendas I just mentioned have been covered.

Only two technical items remain pending, owing to a lack of time and, logically too, to the end of Dr. Perez de Cuellar's mandate. Thus, there was no chance to begin discussing the timetable for the agreements we reached. We were also unable to discuss how the FMLN will end its military structure and join the civilian, political, and institutional life of the country.

It was agreed, however, that these two aspects will be negotiated between 5 and 10 January. If no agreement is reached through direct negotiations, then the two parties will have to accept a formula from the UN secretary general—Dr. Ghali. That will be done to guarantee that the agreements, including the two technical aspects, will be completed no later than 14 January, in order to

proceed to the formal signing of the agreements in Mexico City on 16 January, which is what we have agreed.

Perhaps you heard [UN negotiator] Dr. De Soto say that all these agreements we have been reaching are on hold, but ready. The New York Agreement called for an overall agreement without partial agreements in the process—in other words, we either reach an agreement on everything, or nothing would be signed.

In this regard, everything we have agreed on to date, except for the two technical aspects I mentioned, are in the hands of the UN General Secretariat. They are ready to be supplemented by these two points, so that the agreements can be signed on 16 January.

[Reporter] With regard to the reduction of the Army, what agreements were reached? What is the percentage of the army reduction and what would be the FMLN participation in the National Civilian Police?

[Cristiani] The agreement on the army reduction is an agreement on the criteria that will be used to determine the size of the Salvadoran Armed Forces. As you know, the New York agreement states that by 16 January the government must present a final plan based on the criteria agreed upon in the negotiations. The only thing we wish to say at this time is that the reduction of our Armed Forces is a logical consequence. Its size was increased when the conflict started, and once the conflict disappears it is only logical that it should be reduced. We also wish to add that a regional agreement will be reached to seek the balance of forces at regional level. That, of course, is a completely different process.

Regarding the Civilian National Police, there are no quotas for the FMLN. The New York Agreement states that the FMLN former fighters will be able to join the police, just like any other Salvadoran citizen who wishes to do so, as long as he meets the requirements for admission to the academy and completing (?his education) at the Public Security Academy. There will be no discrimination for admission to the new Civilian National Police and there will not be automatic admissions or quotas for any special sector.

[Reporter] [words indistinct] the Salvadoran people. I would like to ask you two questions. First, within the framework of the negotiation, how would you evaluate the concessions made by both parties. Who made the most concessions, and why? In addition, do you believe you can face those sectors in El Salvador who are opposed to the agreements?

[Cristiani] Before answering you, I would like to suggest if we could first proceed with those questions in Spanish, and then I will gladly answer those reporters who wish to ask in English. The reason I suggest this is to avoid having to go from one language to the other, which could result in confusion or in having to answer in Spanglish. With respect to the question, I believe the agreements that were made develop from the phase sponsored by the UN secretary general, which started in Geneva in April 1990. It was determined then that the objective of this phase would be to deal with national issues that resulted in general benefit. In that respect, those issues were determined to be the consolidation of democracy, unrestricted respect for human rights, and national reconciliation. During the negotiations we have tried to ensure that agreements made were within the general, originally determined objectives. In addition, the agreements would result in general benefit to the Salvadoran people as a whole.

Specifically, such benefits should entail strengthening the democratic institutions of our country, including constitutional reforms, and adapting the Armed Forces to the new realities of peace. In short, every aspect related to democratic institutions such as justice and human rights have benefited from the negotiations. That is why we have said, without any doubt, that the biggest winner in the negotiations has been the Salvadoran people. The future that awaits the country after the improvement that has been stamped on Salvadoran democracy through the negotiation process can only result in positive benefits for the Salvadoran people. That is why we say that the country is the overall winner. Most logically, some demanded, others gave in, others had something to offer during the negotiations. If you want to look at it from that point of view, then the Salvadoran Government as the legitimate representative of the people was empowered to strengthen whatever exchange that would result in improving democratic institutions in El Salvador. That is why the government became the recipient of the requests made by the FMLN. With respect to those issues where we considered that there were sufficient reasons and where the objectives of an agreement were being met, then the government decided to agree on [illegible] issues. On the other hand, what the FMLN could give the Salvadoran people is the end of an armed conflict it has been waging for the past 11 years. In other words, lay down its weapons, become a political party, and have the same arena the other political forces have and seek, like all civilized people, political power through the instruments of the same democracy we were strengthening in other aspects. In that respect, I do not believe that the real issue is to decide who gave more and who gave less. We believe the Geneva objectives I initially mentioned were achieved through the agreements.

With respect to the second question, I believe I can answer as follows: On very few occasions can we be lucky enough to satisfy all persons with what we do. There will always be someone who will not be satisfied, or those who will prefer to denigrate what has been achieved. Nevertheless, I am convinced that a great majority of the Salvadoran people lived day by day, just hoping for peace in El Salvador. We believe peace has been achieved without any sacrifice. That benefit will not only be peace; we have also been able to strengthen Salvadoran democracy through the process. That can only result in benefits for everyone. It is in this aspect that we

must analyze what has taken place. The important point is that the great majority of Salvadorans will understand the objective we have been seeking and the benefits they will bring to Salvadoran society.

[Reporter] I have a question that refers to the previous question. Two months ago, you said here in New York that you thought your most difficult decision was coming to New York. You thought it had been your most important decision, more so than any other issue. In this round of talks here in New York on 31 December, what would you say was the most difficult issue?

[Cristiani] In this round of talks, I think that if we are going to talk about granting things, I think it is very dangerous to risk the last minute—and I am not specifically referring to the person, but to the post. Prior to our arrival we told the secretary general we wanted to be sure we had the right conditions, because we might be wasting that last minute.

As of 27 December, the secretary general told me that conditions were ready so that I would decide to come here and to join the dialogue commission in making this last effort and trying to see if we could reach a final decision during the term of Secretary General Perez de Cuellar

Thank The Lord, we have achieved that goal. Therefore, I believe that far from feeling as if we had made a sacrifice, we feel that we have achieved something that is above any sacrifices. We can only think of the benefits it will bring to the Salvadoran people.

[Reporter] Who will be the director of the National Civilian Police?

[Cristiani] The appointment will be made through the secretary general, and I would prefer not to give the names unless the secretary general mentions them first. I do believe it is up to the secretary general to announce the names.

[Reporter] Mr. President, the new year has just begun in San Salvador. What do you have to say now that peace is closer?

[Cristiani] Well, actually right now the new year has not begun in El Salvador. Due to the different time zone, one gets confused. Naturally, I wish all Salvadorans a very happy 1992. This is the year in which we begin a new era for the country, and we hope that new era will bring much happiness and well-being to all Salvadorans.

[Reporter, in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish] For the benefit of the English-speaking audience, could you explain what this means for the Salvadoran people?

[Station announcer] At this time, the news conference will continue in English. Therefore, our radio and television network concludes coverage of the message from President Alfredo Cristiani.

Returns, Comments Further

PA0101165292 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 1522 GMT 1 Jan 92

[News conference with Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani in San Salvador on 1 January; by unidentified reporters—live or recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Mr. President, what are the achievements and limitations of the New York agreement?

[Cristiani] The achievement is definitive peace. The only limitation was that an agreement had to be reached on the discussion of the last two topics, but there was no time to negotiate them in New York because time was up for Mr. Perez de Cuellar. They will be negotiated on 5 January, however, and will have a deadline of 10 January. The signing of the definitive cease-fire and the beginning of peace will take place in Mexico on 16 January.

[Reporter] What has been the biggest obstacle in the negotiations?

[Cristiani] I think that the biggest obstacle is that the negotiating parties are always trying to get more than they should. That may be the reason for the long negotiations and for the lack of time to discuss the last two topics. If one makes an assessment of what has been agreed on, however, I think the agreements are quite just and in many cases will bring benefits for the country.

[Reporter] What was the most troublesome issue in the peace talks?

[Cristiani] The National Civilian Police was the topic that took the longest to solve. However, we were able to solve it. We were able to eliminate the section that was a problem; and after that, we were able to work faster on drafting an agreement on the police. It will be a police that, I believe, will be beneficial for the country because of its professionalism. The police force will be apolitical.

[Reporter] Could you expand on the National Civilian Police aspect and how it was included in the agreement? There is much speculation about power quotas for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] in that regard.

[Cristiani] The police will have no specific quotas for any sector in the country. There will be no discrimination as to who can enter. There will be no discrimination for political or any other reason. Any citizen, regardless of his origin, will have the right to make a career in the public security field if he meets the admission requirements and goes to the Public Security Academy.

[Reporter] What will be the hierarchy in the National Civilian Police? What will be the FMLN participation in it?

[Cristiani] In the transition period, it will be directly under the Presidency. Once that period is over, when the first cadres complete training at the new Public Security

Academy, the police will go under the Interior Ministry, which will then be called the Interior and Public Security Ministry. It will have a specific deputy minister who will be in charge of the national police.

[Reporter] What period of time has been specified for this entire process that you mention?

[Cristiani] There is a tentative period of 21 months. That obviously cannot be rigid in the organization of a body such as a police. We hope it can be done within that time, however—naturally within the next two years—so that it can be the security corps under the Interior Ministry.

[Reporter] What conclusions have been reached in New York concerning the implementation of the cease-fire agreed on by both parties?

[Cristiani] The most important one is that at long last, we have reached a true agreement on the disarmed FMLN joining the institutional, civilian, and political life of the country. In the first place, the end of the armed confrontation begins with an informal cease-fire. Then the verification groups will conduct a separation of forces, and later end the military structure of the FMLN, so that it will join society as any other disarmed political group in El Salvador.

[Reporter] Mr. President, what topics are still pending?

[Cristiani] Specifically, a timetable for the agreements—that is, when the agreements that have been reached will be implemented. Naturally, if it took us to the last minute to reach those agreements, we did not have time to establish the timetable for implementation. Another pending issue is the manner for ending the military structure—that is, the FMLN turning in its weapons to the United Nations. That will be another process. Then there is the manner in which the FMLN will join civilian life in El Salvador. The manner in which it will disarm and join civilian life is pending, although the dates on which it will take place have already been established.

[Reporter] Would the observers for implementing the cease-fire be the UN Observers for El Salvador [Onusal] and the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace [Copaz], or is another force going to be included?

[Cristiani] No. Onusal and Copaz are the mechanisms to control and verify the implementation of the agreements.

[Reporter] Only those two?

[Cristiani] Yes, only those two.

Panama

New Supreme Court Directorate Board Sworn In

PA0201023692 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 28 Dec 91 p 16A

[Report by Elkilia Santos]

[Text] The new Supreme Court Directorate Board was sworn in on 27 December at the Supreme Court of Justice building. The new board is chaired by Carlos Lucas Lopez, who was reelected for a second consecutive term. The ceremony was attended by President Guillermo Endara, several ministers of state, directors of autonomous agencies, and local lawyers.

In addition to Lucas Lopez, Aura Emerita de Villalaz was sworn in as court vice president and president of the Second Penal Court. Magistrate Arturo Hoyos was sworn in as president of the Third Administrative Court.

New Supreme Court Magistrates Rodrigo Molina and Mirza de Aguilera were sworn in by Endara during the same ceremony. Molina, whose term had ended, was reelected to the post. Aguilera replaces Magistrate Cesar Quintero, whose term had ended.

The personnel commission was also sworn in during the ceremony. The commission will review the qualifications of those who apply for judicial branch posts, thus enforcing judicial laws.

Broadcasters Protest Attempt To Close Radio

PA0201043292 Panama City EL SIGLO in Spanish 30 Dec p 14

[Communique issued by Carlos Ivan Zuniga, president of the Panamanian Broadcasting Association, in Panama City; date not given]

[Text] The undersigned Carlos Ivan Zuniga, president of the Panamanian Broadcasting Association [APR], by virtue of the civil rights that assist him, and in fulfillment of the duties of his post, hereby presents to the community the following

COMMUNIQUE:

First: Based on direct examination and physical and documented evidence, I know for a fact that on 27 December an official from the Ministry of Government and Justice summoned Aris de Icaza Hidalgo to serve him notification of Executive Resolutions No. 59 and 63 of 1989, which order the closure of the radio stations that form La Gran Cadena Exitosa network.

Second: Aris de Icaza has stated that he did not receive the notification of the aforementioned resolutions because the authorities, who pretended to serve such notice, caused his departure from the country and later exile.

Third: The resolutions issued by the dictatorial regime, despite the fact that Icaza was never served notification, were carried out. Consequently, the government ordered the stations in Panama and Chiriqui silenced, and their installations and equipment destroyed.

Fourth: After these resolutions, which were issued by the dictatorship, the present regime drafted another, assigning the frequencies belonging to the stations closed and destroyed by the deposed regime. The ministry has

not served notification of said document, according to what we have learned, to any of the interested parties, because its original does not carry the signature of the former minister of government and justice. It therefore awaits approval by Juan Chevalier, the current minister.

Fifth: We believe it is disquieting that the present government should resort to the unacceptable application of outdated resolutions, that have already been carried out, and were a product of the dictatorial phobia against the people's will; a will that struggled until it eradicated the regime. We believe the government's actions should be ruled by a philosophy that follows the path of a functional democracy; one of whose most genuine demonstrations is freedom of speech.

Sixth: The last thing we, who fought for the installation of a democratic regime, could ever have imagined was to see the gag laws put into effect. Therefore, faced with the danger these events represent, we, who serve the people in the conquest and exercise of their rights, see no other way but to PROTEST—as in fact we do PROTEST—any act, governmental or not, that should imply a threat or an intention of prosecuting any media or individual who expresses his or her opinion in a respectful and responsible manner, as LA GRAN CADENA EXITOSA did in the past and continues to do.

Seventh: We will proceed to demand that the executive branch immediately repeal all those laws, decrees, orders, resolutions, and any other means used by the dictatorship to submit the media and the defenders of freedom of speech to their whims. Such instruments remain subdued but not extinct, after two years of the present government. As such they remain a dormant threat this government maintains against the very people who brought it to power.

Eighth: We request that the minister of government and justice investigate and immediately hold accountable those members of his staff found to be responsible and, in so doing, prevent the commission of such affronts and attacks, behind his back, against freedom of speech.

Ninth: We hereby warn the members of the APR about this dormant danger against freedom of speech.

We condemn the use of any such illegal and anti-democratic tactics by the government of President Guillermo Endara Galimany, which were promoted by Ricardo Arias Calderon, the former minister of government and justice, and who is no different from his predecessor Rodolfo Chiari de Leon.

Signed: Carlos Ivan Zuniga, president of the APR.

Minister Denies Closure

PA0201013592 Panama City Radio KW Continente in Spanish 1200 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Report by Jenny Lee Martinez]

[Text] It was recently reported that La Exitosa radio station would be closed down. Government and Justice Minister Juan B. Chevalier was asked about it.

[Begin Chevalier recording] We have no intention of closing any radio station. I have said that all along. The only thing I want.... [pauses] We found out that the media directorate failed to do a lot of things because it simply postponed everything. The only thing I want is to organize everything properly—that is all. I will close no media, no media. All I want is for everyone to go, submit the appropriate applications, and we will give them their frequencies. We will not close anyone down. Who started this rumor? The problem is that people sometimes go to extremes, or they want to solve things over the telephone. I am not a person who solves things over the telephone. I will be very glad to meet with everyone. I am not interested in closing down La Exitosa or any other station. The radio station is responsible for its own situation. Consequently, if there is a plan to resolve the situation, I will gladly meet with them—and things will return to normal.

I want to tell you that other stations—I do not want to mention their names right now because I do not think it is ethical to do so—are using frequencies, although they have not formally submitted the proper requests. I invited them to submit the requests but they tend to procrastinate, and they failed to do so—and this cannot happen. I think we will all understand each other perfectly well and we will organize things appropriately. Everyone should have what they must have, but legally—not based on who has more influence or less influence. I do not believe in influence. I believe that things should be normalized for the sake of radio and television. Everyone should have his documents in order. I promise you that I will not persecute or close down any media, no matter how many lies they tell. I am not interested in that. Let the people judge them. [end recording]

Chevalier referred to the fact that the Legislative Assembly recently approved constitutional reforms that eliminate the army.

[Begin Chevalier recording] I believe we have made considerable progress. The situation may be far from perfect—I do not know, I would have to analyze it in depth—but at least we are on the right road. [end recording]

Referring to the army's elimination, Chevalier said it is senseless to have an army in Panama.

Colombia

Measures Against Violence, Drugs Announced

PA0101150192 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 29 Dec 91

[Text] In a move primarily aimed at neutralizing guerrilla activities, the government of President Cesar Gaviria will implement specific measures to counter violence and terrorism. The plan calls for special operations in certain key areas of the country. It will involve all groups working in the national, departmental, and municipal administrations.

There will be surveillance and special control measures for essential sections of the national economy such as oil, electricity, transportation, and communications. In order to halt the terrorist activities of the guerrillas, the Ministries of Government, Defense, Mines, Public Works, and Communications will coordinate the specific plans for protecting the electricity networks, the oil pipelines, the highways, and communications. President Gaviria has entrusted the aforementioned ministries with coordinating special plans that seek to neutralize guerrilla activities in the country and to prevent violent actions against the essential sections of the national economy. In announcing the protection and control plan, President Gaviria said the civilian population will also be involved in the regional development plans and in improving living conditions in their respective areas. Gaviria said his goal is to prevent the reactivation or the return of the guerrilla groups to those areas from which the rebels were evicted.

President Cesar Gaviria, who has issued a national directive outlining several strategies to eliminate violence and crime in the country, has asked the Justice Ministry to prepare a special plan to thwart chemical products used for processing drugs from entering the country. The Defense Ministry and the police will also be responsible for managing strategies against the chemical products used to produce cocaine, by creating technical teams to work specifically in that area. The teams will also be concerned with the problem of money laundering, the irregular movements of monies, and illegal enrichment.

Within the plan outlined by the government for controlling the entry of products used for processing illegal drugs, within six months the justice minister will have to present a study on the needs of the national chemical industry. Within one month, the Defense Ministry and the National Police will prepare a plan to control the illegal import and diversion of chemical products. The plan will call for creating, organizing, and training technical and specialized teams in the matter under the direction of the Narcotics Police.

The Justice and Defense Ministries will also coordinate implementation of strict controls on the industries using chemical substances. In order to control the economic benefits of narcotics trafficking, the Department of Administrative Security will coordinate with the Defense Ministry, the police, the office of the attorney general, and the state economic organizations, the development of specific plans to monitor the laundering of foreign currency operations, the irregular movements of money, and illegal enrichment.

The government also announced the creation of a special force to investigate missing citizens. The topic was part of a national strategy developed by President Gaviria, who announced ambitious plans to stop guerrilla violence in Colombian territory. The Defense Ministry and the police will be in charge of drafting a strategy that includes the creation of a group specializing in the investigation of missing persons. The two organizations will have the support of the attorney general's office, the Office of Criminal Investigations, and the human rights advisory office of the presidency.

President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo revealed the way in which his administration will strengthen its strategy to fight drug trafficking networks. The initial objective is to expand international cooperation in order to weaken the drug trafficking networks, to reduce their profits, and to achieve greater parity in paying for the costs of the struggle. The Foreign Ministry will be in charge of performing that duty, and other institutions participating in international meetings must coordinate with them. In addition, Civil Aeronautics will make the necessary contacts with the authorities of neighboring countries and Bolivia in order to reach an agreement on a joint air surveillance program to control and supervise the use of regional airspace by unauthorized planes.

The Defense Ministry, through the Navy and the Air Force, will increase the development of joint air operations to monitor the waters of the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean.

Foreign Trade Minister on Economic Integration

PA3012234191 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1800 GMT 28 Dec 91

[Text] Bolivia announced on 28 December that it will follow its president's order about joining Colombia and Venezuela in efforts to form an Andean America without tariffs on imports. Then who is responsible for the great integration crisis? The presidents of Peru and Ecuador also promised to join the effort, or have their ministers contradicted them?

Diego Fajardo spoke to Colombian Foreign Trade Minister Juan Manuel Santos before he left for Cartagena on 28 December.

[Begin recording] [Santos] This morning we reached an agreement with Venezuela regarding tariffs on imports from other countries. That was the order we received from the presidents in the Barahona document. Unfortunately, we could not reach that agreement at the Andean pact.

[Fajardo] Why, Minister Santos?

[Santos] Because Ecuador and Peru had serious reservations regarding the tariff we should use. Ecuador was not really prepared at the time—they wanted more time to study and analyze—and they were not ready to make that decision that Colombia and Venezuela were ready to make. Therefore, Colombia and Venezuela decided to act bilaterally, because neither country can advance in the integration process at a slower pace. We have to integrate quickly, so we decided to go on alone for the time being.

[Fajardo] So, Mr. Minister, can we say that Peru and Ecuador disobeyed their presidents.

[Santos] It is not that they disobeyed them, but rather that they did not fulfill the order.

[Fajardo] Ecuador said that you, the ministers of Colombia and Venezuela, changed the rules of the game at the last minute. Is that true?

[Santos] That is not true because the agreement we reached with Venezuela is not incompatible with the integration process.

[Fajardo] Will there be a meeting in a couple of months?

[Santos] A meeting is scheduled for January or the first week of February, and we hope that we may continue the discussions on the common tariff with these two countries.

[Fajardo] What are the most important points in the agreement reached with Venezuela?

[Santos] That, regarding trade, we become a single country. Colombian producers can sell in Venezuela as they sell in Colombia, and Colombian consumers can buy Venezuelan products as if they were Colombian.

[Fajardo] Will the borders be strengthened?

[Santos] Regarding trade, the borders will disappear. Regarding commercial matters, it will be a single country. [end recording]

* Gaviria Opens Congress, Outlines Plans

92SM0174A Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 2 Dec 91 pp 9A-10A

[Report on and "text" of speech by President Cesar Gaviria opening the first session of the new Congress of the Republic on 1 Dec 91]

[Excerpts] According to the president, the country's goals in the decades to come will be peace, pluralism, equality, participation, modernization, and creativity. He has reiterated that no matter what the outcome of the peace talks with the guerrillas in Caracas, the country must invest more in security.

The president of the republic, Cesar Gaviria, full of optimism about the future, inaugurated the regular session of the new Congress of the Republic yesterday with a speech in which he explained the changes that the country has undergone in recent months. [passage omitted]

The following is the text of the president's address:

Honorable Legislators:

We are gathered here today to celebrate the beginning of a new era in Colombia's history. No one must forget that this is how great our responsibility is.

The people have summoned us here today, 1 December 1991, so that together we can undertake a long journey to build a different Colombia, one that is prosperous, modern, just, and peaceful. The very fact that you have been elected to undertake this historic mission deserves acknowledgment and appreciation from the president of the Colombian people and from the administration. And of course you deserve all of our cooperation and support.

Millions of hopeful Colombians are watching you. They sense that the country has changed and are calling for further change. They like their new constitution and want it to be developed further and obeyed. They see that a new international order is taking shape as Colombia approaches the 21st century. By dint of sacrifice and hope they themselves have forged a broad path that offers opportunities for all. In spite of the stubbornness of the violent, they can glimpse a bright, clear horizon. And you, the members of the first congress elected under the nascent republic, in whom the citizenry has placed its trust, are here, in this building in which the makers of our history have sat, to protect, develop, and strengthen this democracy.

We have corroborated what Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo announced in 1934 when he was sworn in as president of the republic:

"Democracy has a gentle and spontaneous facility to make revolutions without violence, without imposition, with upsetting the rhythm of the law and republican stability."

To Colombia's good fortune, the National Congress is able not only to rely on the intelligence and experience of all of you but also now has sufficient powers to fulfill this great responsibility. The Constitution of 1991 has given them to you, and you are quite familiar with them. The electorate has also formed a balanced, pluralist Congress with representatives from all over the country, from different ethnic groups and cultures, from the main political movements and parties that embody renewal and change. For the first time, senators elected from the nationwide district and representatives elected from regional districts are gathered together in a single body, in a healthy synthesis of views. For the first time in many years, just like the Constitutional Assembly, your first task will be to establish your own rules and regulations.

A historic mission. A Congress equipped to fulfill it. A country that knows that its representatives will live up to their responsibilities, as did the National Constitutional Assembly. And a president of the republic who maintains his ironclad pledge to intensify participatory democracy, to make government efficient, to further develop the Constitution, to modernize the economy, and to achieve a stable, lasting peace.

Let us take a look at what we have accomplished, what remains to be done, and how we are going to do it.

We have relieved the anxiety of being trapped in a tunnel of terror whose sole exit, according to ill omens, led to the abyss. We have escaped from what seemed a dead end. The Colombian people took courage from adversity, and each drop of blood became the seed of this springtime.

We have regained confidence in Colombia, which we never should have lost. Skepticism has been giving way to the faith that we all have in the future. This is not optimism; it is realism about what Colombia is. May the awareness of what we were able to accomplish strengthen us in surmounting the barriers that can still be seen on the road!

The agenda of renewal and change has grown. There was and is so much to do that we are not focusing our attention exclusively on violence, so that we can later address other, no less pressing problems. We are taking on several challenges at once, lest we become bogged down in just one area of our present or postpone our entire future.

The ties to the past that for decades prevented Colombia from moving full speed ahead have been severed. The thwarting of reforms, the fear of major change, the state of siege, the institutional pacts of shared responsibility, the fondness for the tranquillity that closed spaces offered.

Also left behind is the millstone of a closed economy that had turned its back to the future, that was blind to new demands, and insensitive to the opportunities for prosperity that flourish in every corner of the world. At last we are leaving behind a cliquish model of development in which privileges and barriers made it increasingly difficult to meet needs, grow, and achieve well-being.

Along with these ties have departed the myths that clouded our thinking: that Colombia was a bogged down, trapped society; that improvisation was a sign of flexibility and cleverness; and that violence would lead to something other than blatant destruction and sadness for our people.

Once these ties were severed, the door was open as well to carrying out the peaceful revolution that we have experienced, the upheaval in our democratic institutions, the upheaval in our political customs, the upheaval in our economy, the upheaval in the defense of human rights, the upheaval in world politics.

The foundation is there for us to continue building our future together. The momentum of change has been unleashed, an avalanche of hope promoted by the people, by millions of Colombians who are prepared to monitor us and to demand resolve, daring, and integrity of us.

So then. The patrimony that rests on more than 100 years of republican tradition is now in our hands so that we may do the only thing that we can and must do: finish building the future.

An arduous, immense, uplifting task that is perhaps as interminable as it is unavoidable. Let us begin, here and now.

The waters are calm. The wind and the seas are favorable, and in any event we have a new, solidly built ship and we also have our enthusiasm and our tenacity.

Where are we to go? The fact is that we do not have models to imitate, nor is there anyone to follow. So it is up to us to chart the course and set the pace, while looking forward, because as Winston Churchill warned: "If we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future."

These are the choices, the great values that summarize the objectives that we have ahead of us. Allow me to enumerate them:

First of all, peace. The peace that Colombians are asking for is more than the quieting of guns. It is security, coexistence, tranquillity. We have been seeking peace since the 19th century. And we have achieved much. The wars between States are over. The armed confrontation between the parties has been left behind. Terrorism has waned. Several guerrilla groups are now democratic forces worthily represented in this Congress. But peace is pitted against the FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] and the ELN [Army of National Liberation], which insist on clinging to the past. They seem to want further destruction, further disobedience, further violence, further authoritarian imposition of ideas. How wrong they are! How blind! But what a great opportunity they have to be the ones who put an end to armed confrontation and, by signing the peace treaty, to 200 years of fratricidal struggle! This is a historic opportunity that the other holdouts from an era that has been left behind also have, the opportunity to continue fighting, but with the weapons of democracy, not by brandishing the sword, the best place for which, as Borges would say, "is in verse."

Second, pluralism. Yes. What you symbolize and what must be the standard of conduct wherever more than two individuals disagree. In an open democracy it makes no sense to fight like enemies, but it does make sense, a great deal of sense, to engage in dialogue as people who disagree. To listen to the ideas of others does not mean abandoning one's own. It means broadening oneself through debate, honing our views, enjoying the chance to converse with someone who respects us and whom we

respect. Those who think otherwise should not call themselves advocates of order, or organization, or authority. They are actually the utopian proponents of unanimity. Intolerance, even if backed by armies, is a sign of weak ideas that cannot withstand the powerful test of debate. Aggressive attempts to impose the truth at times merely conceal a fear of calm discussion that can persuade anyone of his mistake.

Just as the time has come to stop thinking that controversy leads to disorder, we need to appreciate the virtues of civilized conflict to prevent civilian society from being stifled. To see that conflict allows diversity to be manifested, unleashes a dynamic that lends a nation vitality, and allows us to reach a new consensus enriched by all of the opinions that have given rise to it.

Our third goal must be equality. Of what use is it to be free in a world of privileges, of discrimination, of arbitrariness? Of what use is it to know that there are opportunities when the haves eat and the have-nots are malnourished, when some can attend school and others are locked out, when a decent life is a luxury for many? To promote equality is to reject the law of every man for himself. It means balancing out the burdens and the benefits of living in society.

It means much more than that, however. It means taking democracy seriously. It means seeing to it that equality does not exhaust itself, that each citizen has a vote, and that we are all equal before the law. Pro-forma equality has been superseded under the new Constitution, which regarded it as insufficient and in its stead established a participatory democracy in which having opportunities is not enough because the important thing is to have the funds, the organization, and a real ability to take advantage of them.

The foundation of all this, of course, is participation. Democracy is better adapted to open spaces than to exclusionary practices. And we should acknowledge that the divvying up of the pie, the distribution of costs and benefits, is not a technical matter but rather a decision that concerns us all. For this reason the new Constitution provides that the discussion of the budget and the plan is to be deliberative, up-front, and democratic.

We cannot expect apathy to disappear unless channels close to the citizenry are opened up so that the man in the street feels that his voice is being heard, that his involvement means something in achieving the results that matter to him. Moreover, encouraging participation means rejecting the tendency towards paternalism that ultimately wrests from our hands the opportunity to build the future that we want.

We will thus make headway in modernizing Colombia. To speak of modernization in the postmodern era may sound outdated. But it is not. It is hard not to acknowledge our society's feudal traits. Domination in the countryside. The various forms of subservience in the economy and politics. Urban customs that are dehumanizing the lives of city dwellers. The loosening of rules and values for the privileged few. This is why it is appropriate to speak of modernization. This is why Colombia must be modernized.

None of this will be possible unless we foster and reward creativity. "There are as many realities as we dare to imagine," Lawrence Durrell used to say. We have to develop new approaches that are suited to our nation's character, that are useful in overcoming our problems, and that are appropriate in maintaining the leadership that we have assumed in Latin America. Only thus will we not come to a halt at the crossroads that are drawing near. Only thus will Colombia remain a unique example worthy of admiration and respect.

Peace, pluralism, equality, participation, modernization, creativity. These are the six cardinal goals towards which we must move in the coming decades, starting now and at full speed.

How are we to do this? If you will allow me, I would like to offer several proposals.

Let us begin be reassessing, in light of the values that I have mentioned, the role of the State, of private groups, and of businessmen, as well as the role of politics and law.

We are not obsessed with dismantling the State as a matter of principle. Above all we want a State that does what it is supposed to well, that does not meddle in what does not concern it, and that provides citizens what they really need.

A young country almost half of whose territory is not integrated, that suffers from serious social deficiencies, in which public services are inadequate or nonexistent in many areas, and that faces huge challenges, has no choice but to have a strong State that can play an active role in resolving major national problems. Who else but the State can vaccinate millions of children from low-income families? Who else but the State can take up the obligation to provide drinking water? Who else can mete out justice, build roads in remote areas, provide health care for the poor, see to the education of future generations, alleviate poverty, and extend a hand to peasant farmers and the unemployed.

We will not fail to fulfill the obligations that the building of a more just democracy imposes on the State. We want a strong State that can meet the needs of citizens. But strong does not mean bureaucratic or inefficient. The way for the State to proceed is to perform its inherent functions better and to withdraw from those spheres of activity that are unsuited to the public sector, thus expanding the scope of private investment.

Privatization is not an indiscriminate therapy. Nor is it a prescription for all ills. We see privatization as a tool that can serve the people. The point is to make room for private businessmen where they can see to it, through their enterprise, that things work better and cost less.

Unfortunately, the discussion of the problem of government has focused too much on the issue of privatization. Reform of the State, as the administration sees it, is a goal that goes far beyond mere privatization.

The Constitutional Assembly transformed the parameters governing the structure and activities of the State by developing a new approach based on participatory democracy. The point is not just that the public sector is more efficient today; it is also more democratic and closer to the aspirations and desires of the people. We have ahead of us the enormous task of rebuilding the State. Honorable legislators, we have before us the momentous responsibility of carrying out the constitutional mandate of decentralization, of citizen participation, of strengthening regional bodies, of grassroots oversight, and of redistributing political power.

The modernization of our institutions, of our economy, of our perspective, and of our position in the world cannot be viewed as the exclusive responsibility of the government. Civilian society, the flesh-and-blood individuals who get up every morning to work hard and carve out a future for their families and for their country cannot be uninvited guests in this undertaking. Employers and employees must be part of this alliance to build our tomorrow.

We are firm believers in a consensus among government, the private sector, and the workers. But the consensus that we want and that we have every desire to build is a consensus to build the future, not to preserve the past. I invite all to join in an indestructible alliance to make Colombia a more just, a more efficient, a more productive, a more promising, a more democratic, and a more prosperous country.

We must also continue to reassess the role of politics. It is not enough to develop leaders or facilitate the peaceful transfer of power. It is not enough to reconcile interests and harmonize goals. If that is as far as we go, politics loses its stateliness and winds up becoming the mere management of routine, a breeding ground for dissent or apathy.

This is how Luis Carlos Galan saw it. Those who have a new way of practicing politics see it this way. And millions of Colombians who would like to see politics fully regain its ability to transform reality feel this way. This is why we are all here: to make sure that politics is guided by the loftiest values and is the engine of the ideas of change.

To launch the peaceful revolution with all of its consequences unquestionably means reassessing the role of law. The new Constitution demands as much. It is conceived as an instrument for promoting change, not as a remote, untouched text. We have begun to overcome much criticized officialism now that a letter-of-the-law approach must be superseded by our interest in making sure that we achieve our social and political aims.

The functions of law are also changing. Rather than establish authority, it seeks to strengthen the legitimacy of institutions; rather than consolidate an order, it seeks to broaden democracy; rather than impose a view of things, it seeks to make room for pluralism; rather than safeguard liberty, it seeks to promote equality; rather than establish rigid models, it endeavors not to close doors to experimentation, imagination, and creativity.

Our country needs law for peace and democracy. Law that is not an obstacle to change but rather an instrument of peaceful revolution. Law that is imbued with pluralist values. Law that represents not rigidity but the ability to respond to the community's expectations and needs. Law that breaks free of codes and lives in the real world.

It is unquestionably up to the Judiciary whether law assumes its new role. The judicial branch has been strengthened enormously. Crucial issues for the future of democracy will be coming before our courts. The Constitutional Court, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Superior Council of the Judicature, and the justices of the peace have been established to meet these challenges in a judicial context that will continue to evolve as it is shaped by real-world events.

We are not looking at a Judiciary that was created to enforce the law. Its mission goes beyond that. It must see to it that the law is the foundation of peaceful coexistence, the reference point for resolving everything from the most minor but burning dispute to the most far-reaching controversies over the meaning of the constitution when positions cannot be reconciled beforehand. The structure of the justice system must be modernized in order for it to fulfill this mission. Judges must be more accessible to the common man and more sensitive to his circumstances and must, above all, exercise in a worthy manner the powers with which the constitution has entrusted them. Colombia's justice system must be an institution of peace, not a scenario where conflicts are prolonged.

The first task to be performed on the foundation laid by the 1991 Constitution is to develop its most important aspects. The scope of this responsibility cannot be minimized. In some cases the point is to prevent the constitution from becoming just a piece of paper, as would happen if we did not develop the powers that the Congress of the Republic has received in the economic sphere. In others, we need to enact a statute so that an institution can start operating, as is the case with the ombudsman [defensor del pueblo]. Finally, certain bills are designed to pass through the doors that the constitution has opened for settling long-standing problems, such as the delicate issue of states of emergency.

In recent months the administration has been working on the bills that make up a broad legislative agenda, which will no doubt be enriched and complemented with the ideas and initiatives of the honorable lawmakers, which the administration will study with the care that they deserve.

As we drafted and revised the bills, it became obvious to us that this task is more than just legislative; it also has a dimension that we could call quasi-constitutional. Many laws are actually extensions of the constitution itself. Statute laws, for example, will have a special status that is closer to the constitution than to regular laws, which must observe them. There are issues, such as the instruments of direct democracy, in which the constitution merely indicates an idea or creates a category, without defining its outlines or scope, this being left up to the Congress of the Republic to do. And on the more complex issues, such as territorial organization, the provisions of the constitution, which individually may seem detailed, when seen as a whole, show how during negotiations or in a compromise among a variety of views a great deal of leeway was left so that lawmakers could exercise the quasi-constitutional function of charting a path among the many potential options.

In this same creative process to consolidate our nascent democracy the administration will act with an open mind, undogmatically, always seeking what is best for Colombia. It regards Congress as its main partner, not only because of the political control that it is called upon to exercise in developing the powers with which the constitution has entrusted it, but also because of the wealth of opinions that will enlighten debates and because we share the mandate that the people of Colombia themselves have given us in spurring this upheaval.

Allow me to talk about the issue of human rights for a moment.

The consolidation of peace, pluralism, and respect for the right to think and act differently are the essence of human rights. There is no reason why the government's efforts to subdue the armed groups that are confronting Colombians should jeopardize the basic rights of any of our fellow countrymen or repress lawful political and ideological activities under the pretext of fighting crime. The skeptics who claim that respect for human rights weakens the government's ability to crack down on subversion and crime are displaying a very serious and groundless mistrust of our law enforcement agencies. We know that they can safeguard the rights of the citizenry, as is their mission, without violating them and without opening up new fronts of violence and retaliation.

We also know that the unilateral use of the human-rights issue by those who claim these rights for themselves but deny them through their actions, such a kidnaping and terrorism, does not fool Colombians or weaken the State, nor does it seriously tarnish our national or international image. No one believes those who speak only of the rights violated by the agents of the State but who seem to excuse or condone what the guerrillas or terrorists do, just as no one would believe a State that would point to the violent acts of armed groups to justify its own unlawful actions.

We have made much progress in this area, and today the defense of human rights is a central element in the democratic awareness of public officials and citizens. The agents of the State are fully aware of the need to consolidate the legitimacy of institutions and to gain the full confidence and steadfast support of the citizenry for the struggle against violence. Oversight agencies have additional tools to prevent those who must comply with the law from going too far and acting in an arbitrary or criminal manner. Law enforcement, which is subjected to a withering siege by all sorts of criminals, knows that respect for human rights is not just a question of honor but is essential in maintaining discipline and lasting effectiveness in its actions.

The gains that have been made in this direction, which enable us to see the outlines of a peaceful, modern Colombia, are the foundation for further developments. Congress has fundamental tasks before it in this regard, such as drafting regulations for the ombudsman and developing the rights of indigenous groups and ethnic communities, besides the consolidation and reconstruction of the justice system.

Undertaking the peaceful revolution with all of its consequences also necessarily means discussing the issue of education. Those who do not have access to education will unquestionably lack the tools to be true architects of their own destiny.

This is unquestionably one of the areas in which the State still plays an enormously important role in Latin America. In its determination to apply the principle of reform in order to pacify, which in education means educating in order to liberate, the administration has launched a crusade to educate Colombians and under the Open Education Plan will soon record the following achievements:

First, access to primary school will be guaranteed to all children. Second, we will expand the coverage of secondary school from 46 to 70 percent in four years and gradually extend the year of preschool to all of the country's children. In short, we will expand the overall coverage of basic schooling to 80 percent. We will also lay the groundwork for achieving complete coverage by the year 2000.

Another of the fields in which the State must commit itself more strongly and put its efficiency to the test is unquestionably health care. Public health, like education, has been regarded by the citizenry as a high-priority right and public service.

Our goal is to assure basic health care for 80 percent of the poorest Colombians. The challenge of health-care policy is to expand the coverage of the government primary-care system by way of departmental and municipal health funds and extramural equipment with direct coverage in low-income areas.

I am convinced that the most important task that we will perform in health care is investment in water supply and

sewer systems, the absence of which causes serious problems, above all among infants. Over the next four years the coverage of the water supply system will rise from 94 to 96 percent in medium-sized cities, from 82 to 91 percent in cities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, and from 24 to 35 percent in rural areas. Likewise, the coverage of sewer service will increase from 87 to 93 percent in big cities, from 62 to 63 percent in other urban areas, and from 8 to 14 percent in rural zones. This will mean providing water service for the first time to six million Colombians and sewer service to four million, thus achieving coverages in line with international standards.

Both on this issue, and on social security, the legislative and executive branches must work shoulder to shoulder.

During the 1990 legislature the administration submitted a social-security reform bill that had to be tabled until the following year because of a crowded legislative calendar. It has become obvious in recent years that the current system is beset by crisis. Not only have we moved involuntarily from a system of reserves to one of distribution, to the detriment of domestic savings, but the current contributions are not even sufficient to meet obligations under this latter model. Therefore, the administration has convoked a commission, established by the Constitutional Assembly, to debate alternatives.

The administration is prepared to examine all proposals that might help create a sound social-security system based on reserves. The preliminary studies, which have been submitted to the commission for its consideration, allow for several conclusions. First, contributions, the duration of contributions, and the retirement age must be increased. Second, these reforms must be accompanied by an administrative house-cleaning and by a clearer division of responsibilities, which could be based on the principle of individual contributor funds, complementing a common fund, which would insure a basic pension.

In this area the task of Congress and the administration will be to reform the current system and to build one that will insure the workers financial security and stability.

For many years the feeling was that our natural wealth, besides being a kind of inexhaustible source of funds, would lift us out of backwardness one day. We merely needed to find the best way to develop it. But while the country had more than enough confidence in its natural resources, the international scientific community had another fate in store for the world. Today it is certainly very helpful to possess geographic and natural advantages, but the nations that create knowledge are the ones that are now vying for control of the market.

Given this context, Colombia is in a worrisome situation. The country does not possess a consolidated scientific and technological structure that can incorporate scientific advances crucial for its modernization. Unless there is a quick and radical change, our integration into the international market will be adversely affected.

The administration has pledged to promote innovation by establishing wide-ranging programs of incentives, by supporting modernization, and by developing a market for technology and other complementary arrangements for transferring know-how. In addition, in order to spend its funds in a more streamlined, efficient manner the State will become more flexible, more responsive, and more functional, with an eye towards promoting research.

The ideas of economic freedom, the importance of market forces, private enterprise, and reducing the size of government have not only radically changed economic thought but have triumphed all over the planet. Whoever closes his eyes today to the winds of change, whoever turns his back on these currents of change, whoever stubbornly clings to outmoded views will remain forever rooted in the past. Interpreting the country's will and needs, the administration has enthusiastically promoted policies of liberalizing, modernizing, and internationalizing the Colombian economy.

There are not many moments in history such as the one that we have lived through. We have been through times in which we have had to make decisions. We had a choice between remaining in the past and readying ourselves for the future, between the gentle comfort of the known and an opportunity to become conquerors and pioneers.

Showing the wisdom that it always has by not erring in trying times, the country has opted for the path of renewal, modernization, structural transformation, in short, the path of an upheaval in its economy. Boldness and change always carry risks, but above all they offer immense potential for progress and well-being. It is on this potential that we are building the new Colombia.

The administration has been spurring a silent revolution in economic policy. First, we must acknowledge that resource allocation is more efficient if decisions are made by market forces, which are usually better at interpreting the needs and desires of people than the discretionary power of a bureaucrat or government agency. We would rather see competition decide who is rewarded and who is punished, than the at times all too visible hand of bureaucratic interests or parochial privileges.

Private enterprise and entrepreneurship are irreplaceable. This is a lesson that bears emphasizing today. Today we know that entrepreneurs, and the chance for private enterprise to operate, are irreplaceable factors in guaranteeing the well-being and development of society. Hence, the Colombian Government has spurred a series of reforms designed principally to liberate the dormant potential of Colombia's entrepreneurs.

Third, in order to be successful it is clear that our macroeconomic strategies must aim steadfastly at monetary and fiscal discipline. There is no more important consideration in guaranteeing the conditions for development than creating a balanced and stable economic environment.

The internationalization of the economy used to be synonymous with loss of autonomy and underdevelopment. We now know that exports, a presence in world markets, and foreign investment are a permanent source of growth and dynamism.

We have undertaken with resolve to remove the distortions that prevent the unfettered interplay of market forces. We have launched a battle against privileges, subsidies, protectionism, excessive interventionism, and all of the barriers to private enterprise, competition, efficiency, and productivity. We are aggressively seeking to win a place on the world market. The transformation and liberalization of our economy are as sweeping today as the institutional "upheaval" that we have inherited from the Constitutional Assembly.

Colombia's peaceful revolution coincides with an era in world history that I would not hesitate to describe as the era of perplexity. Everything that was unthinkable just a few years ago has come to pass. Every day we are surprised by a new development that confirms the unstoppable advance towards a new world order. Those who used to know only the language of guns and megatons today speak the language of cooperation and solidarity. Those who used to live in the gray silence of never-ending dictatorships are now dancing irreverent dances on the walls that democracy has toppled. Those who have abused force are today subject to reason and international law. In short, it would seem that just as we were preparing to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World, mankind was finally striving to build a new world.

Our foreign policy is making Colombia and Latin America leading players in the definition of this new international order. We are not going to be passive spectators to changes in the world. The country's priorities, its national interests, and the region's aspirations are firmly present in discussions of and solutions to mankind's major problems.

In the past, alliances were formed to defend against the other side; blocs arose from political antagonisms and ideological rivalries. In today's world things are becoming different. Today, nations are uniting to expand their horizons of progress and well-being, to broaden the opportunities for trade and investment, to find common paths in meeting the challenges of backwardness and poverty.

This is what we are doing. Colombia is no exception. The country's foreign policy is creating new possibilities for integration, opening up markets, strengthening economic ties, in short, fulfilling the obligation to project new processes of internationalization and economic liberalization into the world.

Just a few months ago the country was living in the shadow of terrorism. That nightmare is being left behind. The struggle against organized crime, drug trafficking, and drug terrorism has been a success. Steadfast action and stronger instruments of justice have restored authority, calm, and the undisputed rule of law to the country. The criminal organizations are being dismantled, their activities hunted down, and their tentacles of violence and death lopped off. The country can be confident that in the not too distant future it will be free of this threat forever. The sacrifice of so many Colombians has not been in vain.

In conclusion, I would like to talk to you, honorable legislators, the representatives of the Colombian people, who through you are building a new country, about the issue of peace with the guerrillas.

The administration has been holding talks with the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board, thus underscoring its intention to achieve a political solution to a conflict that nowadays seems irrational. Our goal is to bring about the conditions for a definitive peace that will allow society to embrace those who, as if history had stopped several decades ago, still employ violence and pain to impose their ideas on others.

But the gesture that Colombian society has made in extending its hand in generosity and offering democracy as an alternative to war cannot be ridiculed or scorned. We will not allow dialogue to become a political and military strategy to bolster the armed struggle. Colombians have rejected terrorism, and the administration, interpreting this sentiment, is not willing to conduct a useless dialogue while guerrilla groups keep on employing violence and rejecting peace.

I would like to reiterate here something that the administration has been reiterating in recent times. Regardless of the course that the talks in Caracas take and even in the hypothetical event that they end satisfactorily, the country must invest much more in security.

We cannot be satisfied with the recent creation of new mobile brigades, of "Unite" groups all over the country, or with our decisions to expand protection for industrial, oil, and mining facilities; to create a vast network of military intelligence; and to boost troop strength in every branch so as to enhance our offensive, defensive, and intelligence capabilities. There is too much common crime for us to think that we have already done all that we can. Colombia's spending on its armed forces and security agencies barely equals that of other Latin American countries that have much less acute problems of violence and crime than we do.

It is clear, however, that we are prepared to persist in our search for a peaceful solution whereby politically favorable conditions can make room for demobilized guerrilla groups to debate and promote their own political agendas. The National Constitutional Assembly also opened the door to the development of special forms of regional organization in those places in which the guerrillas have had a presence so that rehabilitation programs can then be pursued to improve political, economic, and social conditions in those areas and make it easier for these groups to rejoin society.

It should be clear, then, that the government and society are prepared to be generous in their quest for peace but are also prepared to accept the sacrifices entailed in dealing with stubborn violence.

Distinguished Legislators, Fellow Colombians:

I must speak, as Luis Carlos Galan used to, of our traveling companions, of those who have accompanied us in building the new country whose foundation is being strengthened through participation and tolerance, respect for the ideas of others and democracy, justice and equality, and a stable peace and a thriving economy. I must speak of the 30 million Colombians who today are watching this new event in democracy. They must urgently realize the importance of involving themselves in this process. The days when the State did everything are over, and the era of interdependence has begun.

Our cause is a Colombia that grows in the countryside and in the cities, a Colombia of the newborn and of those who have no roof over their head, the Colombia of those who are taking their first steps and lack a home, the Colombia of those who are beginning their journey through life and learning the three R's without having a school to go to.

It is for this reason that there will be no pause in the peaceful revolution. One can sense the optimism that is spreading throughout the nation and giving a further boost to the economy. We have left the dark days behind, and although the arrogant shadow of violence still visits us, no one can stop this country any longer.

This is my fundamental belief, the faith that keeps me going each day. May this be the sentiment that always guides you in your decisions, and may this be the mark that we leave behind so that our children, the new generations of Colombians, are assured of a homeland that is full of virtues and forever free of violence and misery.

To those who have hesitated to join in the modernization of the country, to the apathetic who have not yet become involved in the sweeping changes that occupy us, to the pessimists who feel that what we propose to do is impossible, to all of them I want to devote my final words.

I propose to them that they compare the underlying meaning of the ageless legend of alchemy with the process that Colombia is undergoing as it eagerly approaches the next millennium.

A true alchemist certainly knew that the crucial aspect of his task was not to transform lead into gold. Therefore, he awoke early every day of his life to continue his effort. Every night, exhausted, he realized two things: first, that his work was not yet done, and second, that he himself, the alchemist, was changing strikingly every day, because he he understood more and more and was therefore closer to achieving his dream. No one has achieved this legendary transmutation. Yet every day there are more and better alchemists.

Colombia is thus like an alchemist, as we work on our ambitious projects. We may go to bed weary every night, knowing that we are still far from achieving our ultimate aim. But we must get up every morning, with stubborn hope, and work hard.

I am sure that soon we will be able to look around us at the country of the 1990's and take stock as follows: much remains to be done; the process is never over, but how we have changed!

Peru

Fujimori Discusses Domestic, Foreign Policy

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["Saturday's Focus" panel discussion program with President Alberto Fujimori, program moderator Dennis Vargas, and local journalists Arturo Salazar, former LA PRENSA newspaper director; Alejandro Sakuda, LA REPUBLICA newspaper director; Jaime Dalthaus, head of the EXPRESO newspaper's editorial page; Fernando Vasquez of Panamericana Television; and Augusto Alvarez of PERU ECONOMICO magazine; in the Tupac Amaru Room at the Presidential Palace in Lima]

[Excerpts] [Vargas] We start the debate by asking the president how he evaluates the work he has done in 1991. Is he satisfied with what he has done? Was something left pending or was he perhaps not able to accomplish all he set out to do at the beginning of 1991? In short, how does he evaluate the work done in 1991?

[Fujimori] After 360 days, I can say that we have worked harder and faster than we expected; but we are obviously not totally satisfied, because the benefits produced by all these measures have not yet directly reached the population. We have set the pillars for our economy in the future, however, and I am sure that we will start to feel that we are truly going in the right direction in 1992. Obviously, there is still a lot to do. There are holes that we have not been able to fill, but this must be seen in perspective too. Let us look back to August and July 1990, when everything was uncertain. We have gone from that uncertainty to... [changes thought] Let us not say that we are optimistic or have reached a concrete goal, but rather that we have retaken a road that is much better defined. In this sense, I do believe that we have advanced. I am sure the journalists on this panel today will be able to determine our current situation.

[Vargas] Right. Mr. President, do you believe you can boast about your accomplishments?

[Fujimori] No. Actually, I am always unsatisfied, because otherwise I would be unable to advance as quickly as we are advancing. My lack of satisfaction

prompts me to move with such firmness. We have attained concrete goals, however, and we will study them during this program.

[Vargas] Some sectors have said your work as head of government has been important and positive. However, many others say that your achievements have turned you into an arrogant person, and that this can be observed in the tone you sometimes use when you refer to the legislative or judicial branches and several other government institutions. Is this true, or is the tone part of your temperament?

[Fujimori] The Agriculture University professors who know me can better describe how I react to problems. I have always been critical. We have to be critical, and even self-critical. We have to admit the cold, objective facts to be able to start to reconstruct, in this case, our country and to overcome the institutional crisis that I have highlighted. Of course, every man has his style. My style is frank, open, and direct. I try to avoid beating around the bush. Above all, I try to defend what I deem to be the right position. I believe we have to confront our national problems by having a critical attitude from the start. If we are not able to admit the true dimension of the problem, whatever it may be, then we would be cheating ourselves.

[Vargas] So, you do not believe you have used an exaggerated tone when you have commented several government branches, and whenever you get a chance to do so?

[Fujimori] Has my tone been exaggerated? That would also have to be analyzed. For example, to state that the judicial branch has deficiencies. Perfect. I am willing to study the problem and reach conclusions. I have made these assertions because I am convinced of it, and there are facts to defend my statements. It is not, however, a matter—I repeat and insist on this—of a confrontation between branches of government, but of a confrontation of problems.

Somebody has to report the problems in government branches. You journalists sometimes mention the problems. However, the citizens cannot point out the problems. They are unable to criticize that way. Well, I feel I have the people's mandate to correct problems and to say things. I say them with the best of intentions, although sometimes I use an ironic or sarcastic tone. However, I am sure the representatives of other government branches understand me. I highlight the problems in a very constructive spirit and to enable us to correct ourselves. I am willing to accept any criticism myself and to place all the problems on the table. We have to be very clear if we want all of our institutions to work to develop the country.

[Vargas] Jaime Dalthaus of EXPRESO will be the first panel member to intervene in this debate. Good morning, Jaime.

[Dalthaus] Good morning. Mr. President, in relation to the topic you have just mentioned, the possibility of your meeting with Congress has been mentioned. The purpose of the meeting would be to highlight the realities of the legislative and executive branches, to coordinate several matters, and, I imagine, to decide the topics that are to be debated during the special legislative period. Given your continuing attacks on the parliament, there is a possibility that important reforms and even the legislative pacification decrees may be repealed during the special period. Thus, your criticism could cause some storms in the long run. Will this meeting occurr? A meeting between the parliament and the executive branch would be interesting. You could discuss, for example, matters related to pacification because there are two different points of view on the subject. The matter would be discussed and, perhaps, an agreement reached to coordinate opinions. This is a topic that requires national unity.

[Fujimori] True. But before answering your question, I want to state that evidently the legislative and the executive branches do communicate smoothly. The fact that a meeting between the president of the Republic and the president of the Congress makes the headlines is an indicator—and I blame myself for this too—that our communications are not fluid. It should be normal for us to meet.

I do believe it is necessary to improve this aspect. However, there are several levels of dialogue between the executive and legislative branches. Dialogue occurs more frequently at the level of ministers and commissions. Probably, communication is required at other levels too but, it is here, at the level of ministers and congressional commissions or with the Congress itself, where we can start to transcend our differences. A good example of this is the budget bill. The procedures were carried out excellently as there was smooth and constant communication between the economy minister and the president of the bicameral body. We made serious observations before the budget bill was approved and some differences remain but can be talked over. There could still be serious differences after we communicate and, undoubtedly, these can be discussed. However, if, after this dialogue, there are still differences that could negatively affect the vast majority of the population, I would feel obliged to say so publicly.

I repeat, I cannot hide proposals that negatively impact the people. Later on, if you like, I can give you some examples. I have always held this position. I repeat, I have maintained this position in a critical, constructive spirit and not as a confrontation or an attack. Perhaps I have used a style that is seldom seen, but do not forget that I am not a politician. I am new at this. I do not believe the legislature will repeal the legislative decrees simply because I commented on some practices in the legislative branch. I cannot assume that Congress will repeal the decrees without studying the issues at stake. I believe Congress will execute an in-depth study to be able to make a decision based on facts. I believe the

decision will not take my comments into consideration and that the law will be passed based on those in-depth studies.

[Dalthaus] However, in my opinion, Congress has very thoroughly evaluated the legislative decrees related to pacification. Initially, the Senate repealed the decree but afterward the Chamber of Deputies, by majority agreement, decided to incorporate an alternative that incorporates several of the proposals made by the executive office. This includes an alternative to the national defense system and other legislative decrees giving a more predominant role to civilian authority and to the democratic political structure in the fight against subversion. The strategy presented by the executive branch assigns the full weight of coordination and management exclusively to the Armed Forces. Maybe the Chamber of Deputies proposal will result in some kind of agreement between the two. This relates to my first question. Is this dialogue or advisers' commission, that even the prime minister suggested, to be formed during your talks with the Senate president? This is a situation where there must be national unity between the various state powers to effectively fight against subversion.

[Fujimori] I quite agree with you that there must be unity and complete conviction, as your editorial expresses. Unity should not be only between authorities but also among the population. We need to more fully explain our strategy. Please allow me to make some comments so that you may clearly understand the differences, and where they lie. For example, as it relates to peasant defense patrols. The decree states that the peasant defense patrols will fall under the jurisdiction of the local governments. Just imagine the peasant defense patrols conducting operations without any type of coordination, since every local government would be operating according to its own tactical and strategic plans. The risk of this is that it could be used for political reasons. Local governments do not follow general strategic guidelines. That situation is of great concern as it would entail a sort of militarism without any command.

The peasant groups are basically defensive in nature. Their organization and weapon handling capabilities are insufficient to face the Shining Path. As a result, they must maintain very close ties with the Armed Forces. Our proposal calls for the Armed Forces to train and supervise the peasants in the use of weapons. Peasant groups against terrorism in an entire province or department are coordinated.

There is an important difference. The government is not planning to militarize the struggle against terrorism; quite the opposite. We are trying, through this strategy, to reinstate state presence and reorganize civilians and ensure their presence too. We want political parties to have the opportunity to get involved.

Picture the situation in Elene Apurimac, Valle del Mantaro, and other areas with very strong terrorist infiltration. These civilian organizations would simply not be able to operate there, because they would be eliminated or become the targets of attacks. The mayors leading the peasant groups would run the same fate.

Thus, I personally assigned the Armed Forces another role: To open paths and leave areas open for civilian authorities to operate. This is not a military role, because the Armed Forces need to win the people's support. They are not using their weapons; their weapons are now machinery to open roads, build irrigation canals, and carry out civic duties. They are actually bringing two things: development and order.

That allows the Armed Forces to closely coordinate actions with the people, win over their support, and have access to information they need to fight terrorism. Instead of the militarization of the strategy, I call it, quote, the civilization of the Armed Forces, unquote. [laughter] The Armed Forces [Fujimori chuckles] are being asked to carry out civic work.

[Vargas] To reverse roles, Mr. President?

[Fujimori] There are areas where neither civilians nor the state can operate. Once those areas are recovered, political organizations or local authorities may win them back.

[Vargas] Is it possible, Mr. President? Are they prepared to [words indistinct]?

[Fujimori] Please, this is not a theory. All the legislative decrees and the entire strategy were not drafted, as is claimed, in an office or meeting of theoreticians. We actually took advantage of the experience we gained in the past months. I repeat: the peasant groups are working perfectly and we have recovered extensive rural areas of the country. This is reflected in these legislative decrees.

The Congress probably reflected another very particular experience when it gave authority over these self-defense committees to the municipalities. But this applies to very special cases such as Seranato and San Isidro, where this has worked. This is not the case in rural areas where there is no control. [passage omitted]

[Vargas] It is now Arturo Salazar's turn.

[Salazar] Mr. President, a year ago we met right here, and truly a lot of water has gone under the bridge since then, obviously very healthy water. However, there is something of the past that has been left behind in this country, at least in my opinion, and that is the archaic and outmoded way of drawing up the budget, even more so, the way spending is structured. The social expenditures in the budget are maintained at the same low past levels. This is a very nominal expense next to administrative and other expenses. This is my only observation of your economic policy that, undoubtedly as you have said, is establishing our foundations. It is obvious that in the year that has passed since we met here last you have gained significant ground against the Shining Path's number one ally: inflation. The inflation rate in August went down from 63 percent to 23 percent in December,

and we are now at 4 percent in November [sentence as heard]. This is truly a record you can be proud of, Mr. President. But this will not be complete without a 1992 budget that will allow us to say technically that we are changing this in Peru. Otherwise the national Treasury will always be creating the problems you just pointed out.

[Fujimori] The problem comes from two areas: One area is income and the other is expenditures. It comes from the expenditure side because there are many aspects to tend to and because we have received an oversized bureaucracy. The central government, as well as the state enterprise sector, has an excessive number of people on the payroll. So we have been taking personnel cutting measures. Of course we have given all personnel the proper compensation and all due benefits and, in some cases, incentives—obviously very small incentives as the Treasury can stretch no further.

We are taking two necessary measures in this area: one is the privatization of public companies to reduce the deficit. The deficit, incidentally, has been cut substantially during the last year. Petroperu [State Petroleum Agency] has reached the break even point, whereas before it was registering hundreds of millions of dollars in losses.

Everything pertaining to privatization is now being run by Copri, the Privatization Commission, under the leadership of Jaime Yoshiyama [minister of energy and mines]. I am sure the process will move along faster under the dynamic direction of Mr. Yoshiyama. Expenditures can be reduced substantially, but not by a simple reduction in social expenses or by not increasing salaries, but by reducing the deficit.

On the other side we have income. The campaign we are promoting with the SUNAT [National Superintendency of Tax Administration] is beginning to bear fruit. Everyone must contribute: large or small, informal of formal, unprotected or not; there are no exceptions. It is bearing fruit. We had forecast a 9.3 percent tax collection. We hope we can meet this objective so we can funnel this greater amount of funds to the social programs that are so urgently needed. [passage omitted]

[Vasquez] Mr. President, I would like to return to the first topic. In a certain way, 1991 has been dominated by your personality. Your critics not only call your tone arrogant, but your style imperial, and that you like to make all the decisions. In addition, they contend that you criticize parliament and call them elephants, criticize the judicial system, and berate the comptroller general. Undoubtedly, these institutions have numerous critics among the population. It would seem that you somehow perceive the ratings and attack those institutions that are deteriorating according to the public's perception. Unfortunately, you do not present any charges or specifically point to where the deficiency lies, for example, relating to parliament or the judicial system. Maybe the deficiency lies in the handling of the Alan Garcia case, who knows. Mr. President, what are your intentions behind all of this? During the past few days, the possibility that you would dissolve parliament, and of the military obtaining more power has been mentioned. What are your intentions regarding these criticisms? These are not merely criticisms, but also very straightforward positions.

[Fujimori] My position is very straightforward—there is no doubt about that. Once again I repeat: I intend to point out the issues that have not been solved. I recently gave a speech at the Center of Advanced Military Studies on the institutional crisis and made some historical references based on facts. I have made a commitment that the institutional crisis will be solved from within, not from outside. It is incorrect, and I reject any such allegations, to say that my criticisms are being made exclusively based on ratings. I do not work for ratings, but on the government and the country's needs. Some alternatives have been presented. At a time like this, no one can say there is no institutional crisis in the judicial and legislative system. It really exists. If we are going to solve it, we must lay it out on the table to become aware of problems. It is also true that there is a crisis in the executive branch. There are state enterprises that are simply not working, and we have to start making cuts.

[Vasquez] But Mr. President, that is known by everyone. Furthermore, there is no need to insist on this issue by using an attitude that indicates that you are throwing your weight around and not providing any solutions, or even pointing out the problems.

[Fujimori] Well, I have clearly stated the limitations of some institutions. For example, in the legislative system we have the budgetary aspect. In the judicial system, we have slowness. I have even presented an alternative to mediation, which I will shortly provide more details. In this respect, I am not only criticizing, but also presenting alternatives. Regarding your question, which I perceive as apprehension....

[Vasquez, interrupting] There really is apprehension.

[Fujimori] There is a question, but it does not imply apprehension [chuckle]. The Constitution is very clear. The president is not empowered to close down Congress. What the president can do is to close down the Deputies' Chambers. As I have already said, in such an instance, I am not going to think twice about it or shake with fear. [laughter]

[Vargas] But such a possibility is very remote, Mr. President.

[Fujimori] Of course. Approximately 18 months have gone by....

[Vargas, interrupting] Only one minister has been censured by the Deputies' Chambers.

[Fujimori] I have not even had a cabinet disapproved. We are very far away from such possibilities. What is noticeable is the fact that the president has a very close

relationship with the Armed Forces. That is because it is a constitutional mandate. I am supreme commander of the Armed Forces and as such I exercise my authority, and clearly state my directives based on the existing problems, such as pacification and development. Maybe this was not done in the past by other presidents, and now that it is being exercised it attracts attention. Nevertheless, it is necessary and essential.

[Vasquez] Can we include the Armed Forces in those institutions that have failings?

[Fujimori] I do not deny it.

[Vasquez] You have been asked to take a position.

[Fujimori] All the institutions in general have their problems and that is why the appropriate measures are being taken.

[Vasquez] Mr. President, the question was: What are your goals? What do you want to achieve? Who is the target of your criticism?

[Fujimori] No one. The ultimate goal is simply to correct. It is simply an attempt to correct, or help correct, these deficient situations so that we may all live better. Peru has lost decades of time for its development. Let us all work quickly and in unison.

[Alvarez] Returning to the Armed Forces issue, we left a matter pending. You have criticized the parliament; the judicial branch; the church; the parties; the unions; the bureaucracy; the Comptroller's Office; the police. No one escapes you. I have never heard you criticize the Armed Forces. My question is: Does this mean that the Armed Forces do nothing wrong, that it is not advisable to criticize them in public, or is it that you do not criticize them because you are the commander?

[Fujimori] I have criticized the police force at their own installations. You are a witness to that. There are deficiencies. There are certain actions that are not right, but they will be corrected. I believe that, among all institutions, the Armed Forces have the least flaws. Obviously, there are still some problems but not of the magnitude of those in other institutions. [passage omitted]

[Dalthaus] Mr. President, you claim that you are not a traditional politician. Traditional politicians have generally been unable to criticize their government or themselves. I want to know the main criticism you have of your government for the past year and what are the main tasks and objectives for 1992?

[Fujimori] They are precisely those that have been left from 1991 because of various factors. Regarding self-criticism or uncompleted or deficient projects, we have:
1. The handling of the cholera epidemic. We needed a more organized campaign to convince the people that fish were not affected by the cholera virus. Despite remarks by the former minister, there has not been a single scientific report saying fish were affected.

[Dalthaus] You were involved in advertisements saying that it was all right to eat ceviche.

[Fujimori] Yes, because I was convinced that fish were not affected. I was backed by certificates from national and international scientific organizations that said that fish were not contaminated. Related to this situation, there were long lines to receive fishing permits for foreign vessels to fish in our waters. This was occurring right in the middle of the cholera epidemic. Thus, we needed a better publicity campaign.
2. Deficient social programs. That is basically because of a lack of resources and management.
3. Recession has affected a sector of the population, but it has been the result of the struggle against inflation.
4. The family planning program did not reach the expected goals, even though I called 1991 the year of family planning.

I think all of these things can be overcome this year and insist on these four or five points: to eradicate cholera; to defeat recession; consolidate the compensation and social development fund by managing it correctly to make it effective; family planning; and support for agriculture. Naturally, the national reconstruction project will continue. [passage omitted]

[Vargas] The issue of Ecuador is essential and cannot be overlooked, because of your impending summit meeting with Ecuadoran President Rodrigo Borja. Referring to this issue, Mr. President, Peru wants to know what your position will be in this summit to settle a long-standing conflict that resulted in a series of controversies throughout January.

[Fujimori] We are not so pretentious to believe that we will settle the dispute in a single meeting. The goal is essentially to continue the detente process and to consolidate the friendship between the Ecuadoran and Peruvian people. I believe considerable progress will be achieved once we do this. We will certainly discuss bilateral issues with President Borja, and I believe that this will prove quite interesting.

We have taken the initiative in this relationship because we could not continue indefinitely without finding a solution to the quote problem unquote which prevails between Peru and Ecuador. That is why we presented a four-point proposal to the brother country of Ecuador. The proposal is quite clear and complete. We will work on it—we are already working on it—and we will discuss the issue with President Borja. I can tell you that the first meeting was very positive and productive—it was quite frank—and I know that a true rapprochement was achieved at the meeting. The chances of finding a solution are not so remote.

I want to mention what the conflict [pauses] the lack of a defined border has cost us in the zone of Cusumaza-Bumbuiza and Yaupi-Santiago, an area where we have yet to reach an agreement on a defined border. There are currently two borderlines in that area—the line defended by Peru and the one defended by Ecuador. The area

encompasses 25 square km, and we might say that 40 or 50 percent of the defense expenses have been destined for this area on our northern border. If you consider that the defense expenses are more or less $500 million, it means that $200 million are necessary to meet our defense needs on the northern border. Therefore, we need $8 million per year to defend each square km in that 25 km area—and Ecuador probably spends the same $8 million.

I have made some calculations and I have come to the conclusion that this small 25-square km area has cost us $2 billion in the last 10 years. Of course, I am talking in simple terms. We could have used the money to rebuild completely the Mantaro base and build many highways and hydroelectric dams. Ecuador could have done likewise, and our situation would be quite different. Hence, that is the importance I give to the quote solution unquote of this problem.

[Vargas] Does your counterpart Rodrigo Borja see things the same way?

[Fujimori] Perfectly well. We agree...

[Vargas, interrupting] Do you concur in that?

[Fujimori] In fact, our countries have more things in common than differences.

[Vargas] Do you feel optimistic about the meeting that will be held 9 through 11 January in Quito, Ecuador?

[Fujimori] Optimistic in the sense that we will take another step toward achieving a joint position between Peru and Ecuador.

[Vargas] We now have Alejandro Sakuda of LA REPUBLICA.

[Sakuda] Mr. President, to persist on the same thing. Ecuador's position entails navigation rights on the Amazon River and, based on what has been published in some Ecuadoran magazines, one of the issues that must be discussed is the establishment of a port on the Amazon River. Is this included on the agenda or will you discuss only the four points proposed by Peru?

[Fujimori] There are no limitations to the agenda, but Peru's overall proposal basically refers to those four points. We can also analyze this issue about port facilities or a free zone, but this will be decided at the talks.

[Sakuda] It means that the talks will not conclude on 9 or 10 January.

[Fujimori] Obviously not, but just imagine the atmosphere of detente, friendship, and understanding that would be created with the visit to Ecuador by the Peruvian president, for the first time in our republican history.

[Sakuda] Mr. President, I would like to change the topic, if I may do so. If we review the situation, Peru's readmission to the international economic system is undoubtedly one of its greatest achievements; but the issue of human rights is still a negative issue. Do you believe that progress has been achieved on the human rights issue in 1991? What would be your self-criticism on this topic?

[Fujimori] Excuse me if I expand on the issue about our achievements. [laughter] The readmission was a gigantic task. I insist on this, because it was possible thanks to the Peruvian people's understanding and sacrifices. The inflation level was reduced—do not forget that we have experienced the highest hyperinflation level in the world.

We reorganized the economy and improved Peru's image; we established a legal framework for legislative decrees; we signed an agreement on drug trafficking; we restored order and displine. These are achievements. I already mentioned the problems: they are the recession, cholera, and so on.

Regarding human rights, we have confronted serious problems because the number of charges reached genuinely alarming levels. Reports on human rights violations amounted to 30 per month; however, in about 10 or 12 months this figure has been reduced to three. I do not have the latests statistics, but I hope this problem will be eliminated gradually. Of course, a total elimination of this problem is our goal, but these things take time. This obviously caused some problems for our bilateral relations with the United States. This is why we made those visits, explanations, and clarifications before the various congressional committees, all of which yielded good results.

[Sakuda] The media have been very critical of the police. The media have reported specifically that there are bad policemen. I mention this in an effort to recover the image of the Constitution and to help most policemen. Would you admit that there are bad soldiers in the Armed Forces, just as there are good ones?

[Fujimori] There are bad individuals everywhere. There are bad policemen, bad soldiers, bad politicians, bad government officials; there are all kinds of people. We are taking drastic measures, without any second thoughts. Those who commit a crime will be punished immediately. In the military, this is done expeditiously.

[Sakuda] Will they be turned over to civilian courts?

[Fujimori] In cases of human rights violations and abiding by the law, of course, they should be turned over to those courts. We have no objections to that. [passage omitted]

[Alvarez] One criticism of legislative decrees on security is that some of their articles go against freedom of expression. I include myself among those who share that view—specifically the article that establishes jail terms for journalists who report on secret matters or matters of security. Do you think freedom of expression should have certain limits? If so, who should establish them, the

government or the journalists? In your opinion, what is the role of the country's media nowadays?

[Fujimori] I will not talk about what we had commented on [words indistinct] yet. [laughter] Of course, there should be no limits on freedom of expression, just as has been the case in the past 18 months. There has been full freedom of expression. I think that journalists cannot object to this. There have been many comments. I know the press is worried about this. But I would like to hear proposals that could make secret documents or strictly secret information compatible with the practice of freedom of expression. I want to hear your impressions on that. In fact, I have no objections to that. I am not that inflexible about this legislative decree. I can handle it differently. I can handle it at the level of military commands and their respective offices. I could take much stricter measures that would eliminate all infiltrations. I can do that perfectly well. [passage omitted]

[Alvarez] Do you like politics enough to think of reelection in the year 2000?

[Fujimori] Yes, I like it very much.

[Vargas] Perhaps prior to the year 2000?

[Fujimori] No, well, I am going to check the Constitution on that to see if it can be in the year 2000 or before then.

[Vargas] During commercials, our dialogue with the president continued. You talked about the Andean Pact. Will Peru continue to be a part of it? Do you truly see specific, real, and possible results in the Andean Pact or will it continue to be a dream, despite all efforts?

[Fujimori] The Andean Pact, that is already more than two decades old, must become a reality. So far, it has involved speeches and rhetoric and that is it. What we did in the Barahona Agreement signed in Cartagena was to take specific measures and steps to make this Andean Pact truly functional. Peru's position has been firm. I think this is well known. We are not willing to continue speculating about a project that is necessary. Therefore, Peru took this firm stand within a framework that permits development, the exchange of products, and that will benefit the people with more competitive prices and better quality. There have been difficulties, obstacles, misunderstandings in the Andean Pact but our position has been very clear: the Pact either becomes a reality or Peru will withdraw. Fortunately, we made it a reality. Of course, there are some difficult steps that must be taken regarding the four tariff levels. It was one of the difficulties we have been observing from the beginning. This means it is very hard to reach an agreement with four levels and five countries.

[Vargas] Are you saying that Peru will withdraw if the conditions you have proposed are not accepted?

[Fujimori] I would not want to reach that extreme. However, the objective is real integration. It is not a camouflaged integration. It is not a constant postponement of decisions.

[Vargas] Regarding the Alan Garcia case, I cannot refrain from asking you a question on such a current issue. Yesterday, former President Alan Garcia was exculpated [exculpado], if the term is valid, by the special court of the Supreme Court's Second Penal Chamber. This was done through a resolution confirming the action issued by court member Roger Salas Gamboa. What is your opinion, as president of the Republic, about this decision by the judicial branch on a topic that interests Peruvians?

[Fujimori] A process was followed in this case and it is well known. As chief of state and president of the Republic I have remained aloof so that the pertinent offices could make a decision on this. I imagine the decisions made at the various levels have been well-founded. In any case, I cannot voice an opinion as head of the executive branch or take any initiatives in the discussion of this topic. I imagine that other offices such as Congress or others [words indistinct] should take their stand.

[Vargas] I must add that it was a decision made through a resolution issued by the special court of the Supreme Court's Second Penal Chamber, which confirmed a resolution issued by the court member. Many say this was an acquittal; but, according to experts, it is yet to be seen because an appeal is still an option. This was simply a decision to dismiss the case at the penal court level. This is the exact definition. The new year is about to begin. Will you begin it with all your ministers? Do you plan to change them or will you reconfirm them in their posts? Are they all behaving very well? Do they all agree with the pace you have set?

[Fujimori] There are no changes. All of them are working very well. I am very thankful for the hard work that the ministers of this and the previous cabinets have put in. Last night, we held a friendly meeting with all the former ministers and prime ministers. We are forming a good work team with a view to 1995. [laughter] And as I said, the censored minister, Engineer Arosel....

[Vargas, interrupting] Is he your candidate for mayor?

[Fujimori] No, he will be senate candidate. Although your question was a bit of a joke, he is candidate number three on the list of senators, no joke. [laughter]

[Vargas] Things come out between jokes. These are things in politics you will find out gradually. Who is candidate number one? Do you have his name?

[Fujimori] Not yet, yours truly is a senator for life.

[Vargas] Yes and also the head of the Presidency. So all your ministers will stay and have your support.

[Fujimori] That is correct.

[Vargas] Many politicians, some analysts and journalists, have chosen you man of the year in Peru. In your

opinion, who is man of the year in the world? Who is man of the year in Peru? Would you be bold and say myself? [laughter]

[Fujimori] Do you want to force me to say that? [laughter]

[Vargas] No.

[Fujimori] There are people who have been very prominent in the world. Undoubtedly, Gorbachev and Javier Perez de Cuellar are the most prominent. I think there is no doubt about that because they have changed the course of history.

[Vargas] Then, in your opinion, the man of the year should be Mikhail Gorbachev?

[Fujimori] Exactly.

[Vargas] By the way: Arturo was just wondering what effect such significant changes taking place in Eastern Europe, specifically the Soviet Union, will have on Peru. This is a very important historical moment. Probably, it is one of the most important events of the century. How will this affect Peru, and what do you expect of our new partners? As result of the changes, the new Russian Federation and the other independent states are our new partners.

[Fujimori] The effects will be felt in the economic sector. These countries will be opening to the world market, and they will be implementing a free market economy. Supposedly the world will be more dynamic, and that same dynamism will benefit the world as a whole, including Peru. I believe this will be very positive in the medium term. Undoubtedly there will be increasing competition among the various countries to attract investments. For that same reason we too must become more competitive. The legal framework we have devised will make Peru more attractive to investors. One advantage Peru has lies in its management capability for such types of enterprises that require investment.

[Vargas] Will we keep open our embassy in Moscow or open other embassies in the other recently created independent states? Will our Moscow ambassador serve them all? What will Peru do?

[Fujimori] For the time being we only plan to have an embassy in Moscow.

[Vargas] Mr. President, since we have no further questions from my colleagues, we have arrived to the last part of this program. If you like, you may take advantage of this opportunity to send a message to the country. You can express your opinion to all our citizens with respect to Peru and its perspectives.

[Fujimori] I firmly believe that most Peruvians perceive there is more optimism in Peru. Obviously, we have not satisfied all our needs, or achieved all our objectives. Nevertheless, restating what I said at the beginning of the program, we have started to lay solid foundations for Peru to progress. We have indications that economic activity will improve substantially, and that fresh capital will allow the creation of more employment opportunities. Fiscal revenues will be used more rationally and effectively. Therefore, even though 1992 will be difficult for all of us—and this burden must be shared by all of us—there will be a rising trend. I have heard comments from taxi drivers, farmers, manual workers, that despite the fact that Peru is undergoing difficult times, at least the future of our children is ensured.

[Vargas] In other words, 1992 will continue to be a difficult year for Peru, and we will have more belt tightening?

[Fujimori] It is going to be difficult, but I repeat: with a rising trend as opposed to other times. We will not fall any further from where we have fallen in the past. All the macroeconomic elements are falling under control. It is only a matter of waiting to reap the benefits. In this sense we can be more optimistic. But this does not mean that in 1992 all our problems will disappear. I also want to send my best wishes for a happy new year to all Peruvians.

[Vargas] Mr. President, thank you very much for allowing us this interview. On behalf of Radio Programas de Peru, thank you very much and I hope you have a prosperous new year.

Special Period Called To Push 1992 Budget

PA3112220991 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2113 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Lima, 31 Dec (NOTIMEX)—The National Congress agreed on 31 December to call a special period of sessions to insist on the promulgation of the 1992 General Budget Bill, rejected by the government, official sources report.

The Executive Branch rejected the whole bill—for 104 million new soles (more than $6 million)—after it was approved by the Legislative Branch. The bill was reportedly to be implemented on 1 January.

The document was returned to the National Congress on 31 December without President Alberto Fujimori's signature. [passage omitted]

Budget Official Comments

PA3112203191 Lima Radio Programs del Peru Network in Spanish 1809 GMT 31 Dec 91

[Telephone interview with Deputy Eduardo Elmer del Solar, president of the Bicameral Budget Commission, by unidentified reporter—live]

[Text] [Reporter] Good afternoon, deputy. We are eager to learn of the possibilities of the annual budget law of the Republic being implemented in 1992. What can you tell us about the president's stand on this?

[Del Solar] As far as I know, and according to what Senate President Osterling told me, the annual budget law was returned yesterday with comments [observaciones] by the president of the Republic. This is an unconstitutional and abnormal situation, because the annual budget law cannot be the object of criticism. This means we will face a rather difficult situation as of 0000 on 1 January. No public official will be able to spend any money because there will be no budget. If there is no budget law, the state organizations cannot operate. Congress will have to hold an emergency meeting, probably within the next few days, and insist on the promulgation of the annual budget law. Congress cannot modify that law because the maximum term it had for modifying it was 14 December and that term has expired. The only thing I can do is insist on promulgating the law. In the meantime, there will be a legal vacuum that might lead to some sort of government standstill.

I think that the attitude of the president of the Republic has been almost capricious, to say the least. That is a shame. We had sought formulas so that a dialogue among the government branches and various groups would prevail. This has not been the case. It has not been the fault of the national parliament. The entire country should know that if the country comes to a standstill, it will be exclusively the fault of the executive branch. It is not right to increase one's popularity by trying to mar the prestige of the other institutions. Naturally, within the next few days, there will be a conflict among the branches of power that should never take place.

[Reporter] We agree with the repeated calls by representatives of the national parliament for such situations not to happen. Their calls were very clear, but the president did not heed them although that would have facilitated the budget process for next year. However, this situation already came up last year and there was some sort of a vacuum. In the end, parliament decided what to do. Now, the reason these comments should not have been made is also vital.

[Del Solar] It is a law, and such comments are not permissible because it is not a common law. It is a law that, constitutionally speaking, is in a different chapter. This is a law that does not originate at the parliamentarian level like other laws. It does not stem from the parliament either. It is a law that, by constitutional mandate, can only be started at the executive branch. It is a law that cannot be presented at any time. It must be presented to Congress by 28 August. It is a law that cannot be approved at any time. It has a deadline of December 14. According to the Constitution, it is a law that, if not approved by Congress, will go into effect in the draft submitted by the executive branch; this is not true of any other law. It is a law that must go into effect on 1 January of every year. This is not true of other laws because parliament sets the date on which they will go into effect. In this case, the Constitution states that it must go into effect on 1 January. Thus, this is a completely different law, not only because of its origin, but because of the way it is drafted and promulgated.

[Reporter] The next step would be for Congress to convene. When do you think it will convene, as we know there will be special sessions?

[Del Solar] I think this must be done as soon as possible for two reasons. Last year, Congress ratified the expenditures made from 1 January until the budget was promulgated. This was done based on two principles. The first was that it was the first time that this constitutional article was interpreted as to the possibility of a veto or partial or impartial comments by the parliament on a law. This was also done based on the government's lack of experience. This possibility does not exist this year. Congress will not approve or ratify any executive branch expenses after 1 January. The executive branch must understand that the responsibility does not only lie with the parliamentarians and other states' branches, but also with the executive branch. It is important to remember that you must criticize yourself as much as you criticize others. In this case, the executive branch has been notified that whatever expenses it incurs must be justified to the Comptroller's Office in due time and then to the judicial branch. I think the country must understand that one cannot play with things as important as the general budget.

[Reporter] You have said it. According to you, this is the personal attitude of the chief of state and it will be up to the parliament to determine everything that pertains to this most important law.

[Del Solar] You must not forget that the president cannot violate the Constitution. He can do many things. He can criticize and has the right to do so. He can do everything the Constitution says he can do but he cannot violate the Constitution. Consequently, the president has left the country without the possibility of having a budget. He also violated the Constitution when he attached comments to a law that cannot be the subject of any comments. But as you said, this is something the Congress must decide.

[Reporter] Thank you for explaining your position. We think there will be more days and weeks to comment on this topic that prompted...

[Del Solar, interrupting] It is a shame because with the beginning of a new year we thought there would be a new spirit of understanding and goodwill to move the country forward. The executive branch has been successfully doing this. The economic policy has some defects still but it is having good results. It is a shame that all these efforts to move the country forward are hindered by attitudes of this kind.